

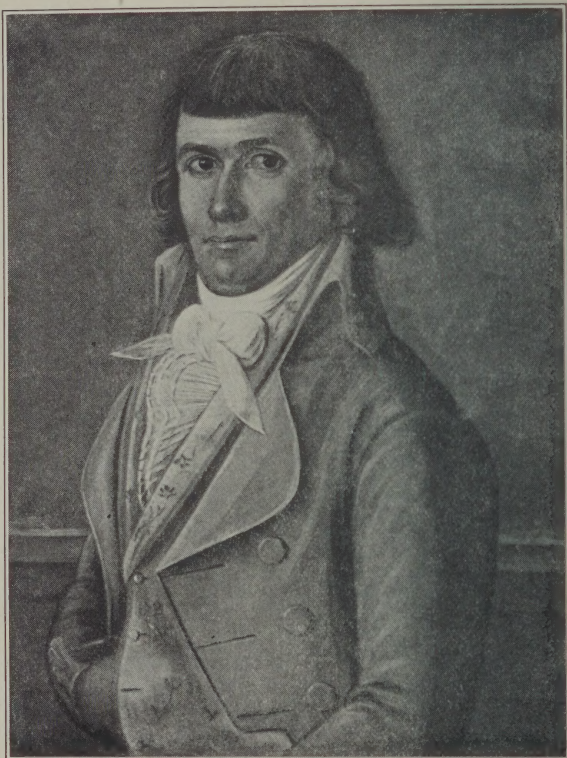
Brewster Ladies' Library
Brewster, Mass. 02631

For Reference

Not to be taken from this room

Elijah Cobb

PUBLISHED ON THE FOUNDATION
ESTABLISHED IN MEMORY OF
PHILIP HAMILTON MCMILLAN
OF THE CLASS OF 1894, YALE COLLEGE



[From a French pastel, 1794.]

“He was tall and straight, of fine figure, his face very pleasant to look upon. He loved children & was loved by them. Distinguished for his sturdy integrity, as well as talent, loved and respected by all who knew him, he died at the age of 80.”

Elijah Cobb
1768-1848

A Cape Cod Skipper

Cobb, Elijah

WITH A FOREWORD BY
RALPH D. PAINE



New Haven : Yale University Press

London : Humphrey Milford : Oxford University Press

1925

Brewster Ladies' Library
Brewster, Mass. 02631

Copyright 1925 by Yale University Press

Printed in the United States of America

First published, September 1925.

Second printing, November 1925.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
PUBLISHERS

B
C653

57641

431c - Sheffield

THE
PHILIP HAMILTON McMILLAN
MEMORIAL PUBLICATION
FUND

The present volume is the fourth work published by the Yale University Press on the Philip Hamilton McMillan Memorial Publication Fund. This Foundation was established December 12, 1922, by a gift to Yale University in pursuance of a pledge announced on Alumni University Day in February, 1922, of a fund of \$100,000 bequeathed to James Thayer McMillan and Alexis Caswell Angell as Trustees, by Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson McMillan, of Detroit, to be devoted by them to the establishment of a Memorial in honor of her husband.

He was born in Detroit, Michigan, December 28th, 1872, prepared for college at Phillips Academy, Andover, and was graduated from Yale in the Class of 1894. As an undergraduate he was a leader in many of the college activities of his day, and within a brief period of his graduation was called upon to assume heavy responsibilities in the management and direction of numerous business enterprises in Detroit; where he was also a Trustee of the Young Men's Christian Association and of Grace Hospital. His untimely death, from heart disease, on October 4th, 1919, deprived his city of one of its leading citizens and his University of one of its most loyal sons.

Table of Contents

	Page
Foreword	I
Biographical Sketch	17
Letters	85

Illustrations

Elijah Cobb	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Ship <i>Ten Brothers</i>	<i>facing page</i> 56
Port Charges in 1811	88
Ivory, Coffee and Palm Oil: a Typical Bill of Lading	96

A large, stylized letter 'S' in a dark, textured font. Inside the curve of the 'S', there is a detailed illustration of a steamship with multiple masts and funnels, sailing on a wavy sea. The background of the entire page is filled with horizontal lines.

At the beginning of the Revolution, in fact, there were more sailors than farmers in the coastwise settlements of Maine and New Hampshire. Shipping was the chief industry of Boston. On Cape Cod, where Elijah Cobb was born and raised, the boys followed the sea instead of the plow, and the dry land was merely a roosting place until they were old enough to sign on in a fore-

Elijah Cobb

castle. The proverbial Yankee traits of canny business dealings, handiness, and resourceful hardihood were bred in those clumsy, home-made vessels. The skipper was also a merchant who bought and sold and bartered the cargoes that filled his holds. His crew risked their own "adventures" in cash or merchandise, while his neighbors ashore owned shares in the vessel and her enterprises. And every voyage was a hazard that might make or break them.

Elijah Cobb is well worth bringing to light because he was so completely typical, from his piety and his eccentric spelling to his mastery of difficulties. The romance of the sea meant nothing to him, although he sailed in continual peril of pirate and privateer and of foundering in a gale of wind. Navigation was mostly by guesswork and to us it seems miraculous that he and his kind were able to fetch anywhere at all. What he called a good ship was not much larger than a canal boat, with a few men and boys to handle it. Such was the training school of the shipbuilders and seamen who, in succeeding generations, were to win for the Stars and Stripes on the high seas a commercial prestige that challenged the ancient supremacy of Great Britain and achieved its superb climax in the clipper ship era.

With unconscious art Elijah Cobb suggests to us the beginnings of his own career. It could not be better done by the practised hand of a novelist. His father, the master of a brig, dying at sea, left a young widow with six small children in poverty on a forlorn Cape Cod farm.

Foreword

The family could not be kept together. "Some of us, must leave the perternal dwelling & seek subsistence among strangers—my Bro^r, being the elder, was tried first, but wou'd not stay, & came home crying—I was then, in my 6th year, & altho" too young to earn my living, a place was offered me, & I left my dear Mother, for that subsistence among strangers which she could not procure for me."

For seven years this brave little codger toiled away from home and then disabled himself by lifting beyond his strength. His dear mother nursed him back to health and, in 1783, when he was in his fourteenth year, he went to Boston to look for a voyage, with his "whole wardrobe packed in a gin case, for a trunk."

You can imagine him wandering down to the long wharf and admiring the "monstrous size" of a new vessel, her great cables and anchors, when the marvelous gentleman steps from her deck, and signs him on for the voyage at \$3.50 a month.

And so as a cook he sailed away for fever-stricken Surinam, or Dutch Guiana. His wages, together with some presents from the officers, enabled him to bring back a private "adventure" of a barrel of molasses and some dried fruit. The trade with the West Indies had flourished a full century before the Revolution. There was always a market for salted codfish to feed the slaves of the sugar plantations. The return cargoes were largely molasses for distilling New England rum. These voyages had been extended to the mainland of South

Elijah Cobb

America; to Surinam, where fish and lumber were exchanged for the products of the Dutch East Indies; to Honduras, whose logwood and mahogany were cut for export to England.

Young Elijah Cobb escaped the swamp fever and returned with twenty silver dollars to put into his mother's hands, "probably, the largest sum of money she had possess'd. since she had been a widow—& that, from her poor little sick Boy." No wonder her tears flowed freely, upon the occasion. For some time thereafter he was sailing coastwise and working his way up to a mate's berth. Then he crossed the stormy Western Ocean and felt qualified for command. He must have been twenty-three years old when he became master of a brig. This was not unusually youthful. Nathaniel Silsbee of Salem, a captain in the East India trade at nineteen, could say of his own family:

"Connected with the seafaring life of myself and my brothers, there were some circumstances which do not usually occur in one family. In the first place each of us commenced that occupation in the capacity of clerk, or supercargo, myself at the age of fourteen years; my brother William at about fifteen; and my brother Zachariah at about sixteen and a half years. Each and all of us obtained the command of vessels and the consignment of their cargoes before attaining the age of twenty years, viz., myself at the age of eighteen and a half, my brother William at nineteen and a half, and my brother Zachariah before he was twenty years old."

Foreword

It was during his first voyage to Europe as a shipmaster that Captain Elijah Cobb showed himself to be a young man of exceptional courage and contrivance. Steering for Cadiz, he learned that it was unsafe to venture too close to Gibraltar and so he changed his course to Coruna in the Bay of Biscay. The swift corsairs of the Dey of Algiers were cruising like wolves to snap up merchantmen and enslave their Christian crews. In his journal Captain Cobb states that "the Algerines were at war with America." This is not quite accurate, for the United States delayed declaring war on the Barbary pirates until 1801, several years after this.

The infant republic, left without any naval force at the close of the Revolution, was compelled to submit to the most humiliating insults and depredations at the hands of these lawless sea rovers. It seems incredible to recall the gifts and bribes that were abjectly paid the Dey of Algiers as tribute, including a handsome new frigate, nor can one read the newspaper account without a blush.

Portsmouth, N. H., Jan 20, 1798. On Thursday morning, about sunrise, a gun was discharged from the frigate *Crescent*, as a signal for getting under way. May she arrive in safety at the place of her destination, as a present to the Dey of Algiers of one of the finest specimens of elegant naval architecture which was ever borne on the Piscataqua's waters. Richard O'Brien, who was ten years a prisoner at Algiers, took passage in the frigate and is to reside at Algiers as Consul-General of the United States to all the Barbary States. The *Crescent* has

Elijah Cobb

many valuable presents for the Dey, including twenty-six barrels of dollars. It is worthy of remark that the captain, the chief officers and many of the privates of the *Crescent* frigate have been prisoners at Algiers.

When Captain Cobb prudently went wide of the Strait of Gibraltar, in 1794, the Dey was running amuck among American merchant vessels. As many as ten of these luckless ships had been taken in one cruise of a brig and three xebecks out of Algiers, and more than a hundred Yankee seamen thrown into dungeons to toil under the lash of Arab slave drivers. And honest seamen were begging from door to door in Boston and Salem to collect funds for the ransom of this fellow mariner or that, with whom they had been shipmates. The tourist who visits the Algiers of today, an ornate French metropolis with the ancient Arab town climbing the hill behind it, can behold strongholds whose stones were laid by tortured, perishing sailormen from the land of the brave and the free.

Bearing safely away from those ticklish waters, Captain Elijah Cobb found himself out of the frying-pan and into the fire. England had gone to war with France in 1793 when most of Europe was allied in the effort to stamp out the flames of the Revolution. The rights of neutrals were tossed aside. American shipping was ground between two millstones. All was fair in war. British and French cruisers seized our ships for engaging in trade which our own interpretation of interna-

Foreword

tional law held to be perfectly legitimate. More than a hundred American vessels were taken by France in 1793 on pretext of trading with England or her colonies.

Captain Cobb could find no reason why his voyage to Spain should be molested and he was too stiff-necked to submit without protest. His papers were stolen by the prize master and there seemed to be no means of redress whatever. He had no friends in France, official or otherwise, and his ship was tied up in the port of Brest while a starving populace looted her cargo of foodstuffs. The Reign of Terror was at its height. Chaos and bloodshed ruled in place of government. The guillotine was a law unto itself. In a period of fifteen months, 17,000 persons had been formally executed in France. The number of those who were shot, drowned, or otherwise massacred without pretense of a trial can never be known, but must be reckoned far greater.

All of which may have harrowed the soul of Captain Elijah Cobb, but he kept his eye firmly fixed on his own predicament. His ship had to be released and indemnity paid him for detention and loss of cargo. After six weeks of wrangling with minor officials, he resolved to go to Paris and seek satisfaction. A stubborn mariner who shoved obstacles aside, behold him making this dangerous journey with an official courier, for armament loaded pistols and a blunderbuss, in a carriage that was "musquet shot proof" and driving like Jehu night and day, without a wink of sleep all the way from Brest, more than six hundred miles.

Elijah Cobb

Undismayed, persistent, Captain Elijah Cobb pursued his way through the weltering horrors of Paris, merely noting that he saw one thousand persons beheaded by "that infernal machine," the guillotine. Thwarted at every turn, he carried his case to none other than Robespierre himself. The audacity of this Yankee seafarer was amazing. He made dollars seem heroic. His motive was really better than this—the compulsion of duty toward the owners who had entrusted him with the ship and her lading. Citizen Robespierre, Carlyle's sea-green monster, spoke the word that swiftly untangled the affair.

Shortly after this, Robespierre was overthrown and outlawed by the Convention. Trying to commit suicide with a pistol, the bullet did no more than shatter his jaw. And now for the final scene in the Place de la Concorde. Captain Cobb stood there and beheld it with his own eyes, on the 9th Thermidor (July 28, 1794). Robespierre rides on a tumbril, the mangled jaw bound in dirty linen. The Gendarmes point their swords at him to show the people who he is. A woman leaps upon the tumbril and screams: "Thy death rejoices my very heart. *Scélérat*, go down to Hell with the curses of all wives and mothers!" At the scaffold they stretch him on the ground. Then Samson, the burly executioner, lifts him aloft, wrenches off his coat, tears the dirty linen from his jaw. A hideous cry and the head of Robespierre is shorn from his shoulders.

And how does Captain Cobb describe this gigantic epi-

Foreword

sode? As if he were making an entry in a ship's log. "Before I left the country; I saw Robertspeirs head taken off, by the same Machine—But to return to my induvidual, and embarised affairs. . . ." This was characteristic of the New England breed of seafarers. They are exasperating at times. They saw so much and told so little. The wonders of the world left them unmoved. The pen was an awkward tool to handle and they were as thrifty with words as with pence.

You will find Captain Cobb waxing loquacious, however, when it comes to the intricate and difficult business of due bills and foreign exchange or smuggling gold out of France. All this is of value to the modern reader as showing how extremely competent were these master mariners as bankers and merchants. It helps to explain why they became the leaders in their communities when they retired from the quarter-deck, and why they were so successful, as a class, in commercial pursuits ashore. They were literally the first American captains of industry, men accustomed to large responsibilities and the tests of critical emergencies.

It throws a curious slant on the moral code of the time to find Elijah Cobb so profoundly pious and yet so ready to bribe and smuggle with a clear conscience. In a way, this point of view was inherited from the American Revolution. The harsh restrictions laid by the mother country on the commerce of her colonies had led to smuggling as an easy road to wealth. In almost every town prominent characters were named who, under

Elijah Cobb

British rule, had stowed in their attics and cellars goods that were not for the officers of the King's Customs to see. To these harbors came vessels built for speed and laden with contraband wares gathered in the colonies of France and Spain. And reputable merchants were always ready to run the stuff ashore. Thus, on the very day when the farmers of Middlesex drove the British out of Lexington, John Hancock was to have stood trial for defrauding the Customs.

And so Elijah Cobb, pillar of the Universalist church in his later years, is not in the least ashamed to admit that he did a very pretty job of running rum to a crew of skilled smugglers between the Cove of Cork and the Scilly Islands.

It was adroit intelligence and knowledge of the world that enabled him to escape from the trap of the British Orders in Council that ruined hundreds of American shipmasters and owners. These high-handed measures aimed against Napoleon, together with his Milan Decree launched in retaliation, made American vessels liable to confiscation in almost every foreign port to which they traded. It was not a proud era in our national history. The time was not far distant when the cry of "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights" was to sound the note of the Second War with England.

Elijah Cobb, loading a return cargo of wines and dried fruit at Malaga, in 1806, learned that England forbade such a voyage. He decided to take a sporting chance of slipping by the English cruisers in the "Gut

Foreword

of Gibraltar." The wind failing him at the wrong time, he obtained his clearance papers by bribing an official. In the opinion of Elijah Cobb there was more than one way to skin a cat.

The intolerable aggressions aimed at American commerce, including the impressment of seamen, had caused President Thomas Jefferson to use the embargo as a weapon in reprisal. If he could not protect American ships and sailors on the high seas, he could, at least, he thought, save them by keeping them at home. Maritime New England had been reluctant to accept an embargo policy. Josiah Quincy had begged Congress to remember that the ocean could not be abandoned by his people "of whom thousands would rather see a boat-hook than all the sheep-crooks in the world." However, the first Embargo Bill was passed in December of 1807, forbidding the departure of American vessels for any foreign port. The results were futile and disastrous. Ports filled with dismantled ships, counting-houses deserted, grass growing in the waterside streets failed to affect perfidious Albion. Nevertheless, the embargo was tried again in the spring of 1812.

Captain Cobb was loading flour at Alexandria, Virginia, for a European voyage when the news of another embargo came like a blow from a clear sky. Hard-bitten New Englander, he had refused to heed the warnings. His own Massachusetts Legislature had denounced such Acts of Congress as unconstitutional, and a hundred towns had adopted resolutions of protest. However, Mr.

Elijah Cobb

Madison's latest embargo was a condition and not a theory, so Elijah Cobb made haste to get to sea before the officials could lawfully stop him. He had twenty-four hours of grace. A gale of wind was blowing, so violent that the ship was almost torn away from the wharf. Here was the efficient shipmaster in action—a hundred tons of stone ballast to be landed, three thousand barrels of flour to be stowed in the hold and secured, provisions, wood, and water to be taken aboard, a crew to be found and signed on, and the vessel cleared at the custom house.

Elijah Cobb turned the trick without bluster or confusion. It was the kind of thing he could do extremely well. His portrait is that of a man very resolute and composed, not much humor in the straight mouth and steadfast eye, a good deal of the Puritan afloat. In his sedate way he must have enjoyed what he called "running away from the Embargo."

England and the United States were on the brink of war. This final embargo was frankly intended as a preparation for war. It held American ships in our own ports and saved them from capture while a swift pilot schooner was sent to warn American merchantmen in northern Europe that hostilities impended and they must hasten home or lie up abroad in some neutral harbor. These signs and portents seemed to have escaped the notice of Captain Elijah Cobb. He was oddly unaware of it all, busied with selling his flour in Cadiz at a profit and buying British bills of exchange to reap more dollars.

Foreword

Congress had formally declared war, on June 18, while Captain Cobb was in the midst of his transactions. And when he sailed from Cadiz for Boston, on July 5, "he never felt himself saffer, on account of enemies on the high seas." Peacefully he jogged across the Atlantic, as far as the Grand Bank, when he was overhauled by a British armed schooner. The subsequent proceedings must upset the conventional notions of the sea warfare of bygone days. All British seamen are presumed to have been ruffianly and outrageous persons. It will be noted that the interviews between Captain Cobb and his captors were conducted with courtesy and friendliness.

The merchant skipper was pained and surprised to find that he had fallen into the enemy's hands. The enemy endeavored to make it as comfortable as possible, trusting that Captain Cobb would "excuse their inquisitiveness."

You will find the dialogue vastly entertaining and not at all as the fictionist would fancy it. Mutual regrets and esteem, the prize politely ordered to St. Johns, the prisoners to be made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances! And then it is your pleasure to meet that fine old Port Admiral of St. Johns, Sir John Thomas Duckworth, who tried to make these unwilling visitors feel at home. "Supercargoes and Gentlemen passengers" were set at liberty.

The display of gentlemanly feeling between sailor foemen was not unique in the annals of the War of

Elijah Cobb

1812. England was well aware that the maritime interests of the New England coast were out of sympathy with the war and it was policy to avoid provoking them more than possible. "Organize a peace party throughout your Country," resolved the Massachusetts House of Representatives, after war had been declared, "and let the sound of your disapprobation be loud and deep." The climax came with the secretly seditious Hartford Convention. The Federalist opposition was stupidly blind to the fact that the war was a defensive struggle against the massed resources of the British Empire. The seafaring population, forgetting the national interests and suffering destruction and blockade, allowed the politicians to lead it by the nose.

Captain Elijah Cobb stayed at home on the farm until the end of the war. Then he resumed his voyages to Europe, uneventfully, and engaged in the African trade in 1818, commanding the ship *Ten Brothers*. There was no worse pest hole on earth than the West Coast and its slave ports, no area so indelibly stained with man's inhumanity to man. A land of treacherous surf and steaming jungle, of tawny beaches and sluggish rivers, the infamies of centuries cursed the names of Goree and Gambia, the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra, Calabar, Anamaboe, and the Congo. In 1819 the slave trade had been outlawed by England and the United States, but many thousands of the poor wretches were annually smuggled into the West Indies and the southern ports of this country.

Foreword

The barracoons and factories were flourishing when Captain Cobb sailed on his lawful trading voyages to Prince's Island in the Gulf of Guinea. Like many another American shipmaster he risked the deadly fever in order to sell his goods to the natives and carry home palm oil, ivory, coffee, and gold dust. The most lucrative traffic was in New England rum, muskets, and gunpowder, but Captain Cobb makes no mention of these as in his invoice, and it is fair to give him the benefit of the doubt. Not that it would have discredited him in the reputable circles of Boston or Brewster. A man could be a deacon and still peddle Medford rum to the benighted Africans.

Captain Cobb stocked his ship with the customary trade goods, gaudy cotton prints, tobacco, beads and brass pots, bandana hankchiefs, flour and meal, salt beef, pork, and fish, candles, tinware, and crockery. His letters are pretty doleful reading. Several other American vessels were with him at Prince's Island, their captains ill or dead of fever, his own ship rotten with it. What they called fumigation was crude and ineffectual. They suffered grimly. It was all in the day's work, and they could only commit themselves "to a mercifull just God who always acts for the good of his Creaturs, & happy would it be for us; if we could always bow with humble submission to His righteous dispensations."

Even this consolation was not enough to make Captain Cobb endure more than two voyages to the Guinea Coast. His ship had to be scuttled at a Boston wharf, so

Elijah Cobb

foul she was with deadly fever, and there was fear that the contagion might spread ashore. This was the end of his seafaring career of nearly forty years. To a ripe old age he dwelt in Brewster, a distinguished citizen and active farmer, "tall & straight of fine figure his face very pleasant to look upon." The imperious traits of the quarter-deck were carried into his religious activities. As a Universalist he played a lone hand for some years, and "met with violent opposition to his views, yet waxing only the more valiant in the fight, he came off conquerer."

It is the wistful desire of every true sailorman to quit the restless sea and own a farm. This boon was vouchsafed Elijah Cobb and it is fitting to bid him farewell when "the wind has got around to the south" and he is just returning from a visit to the young orchard—a mellowed old gentleman who had lived through the most stirring era of American ships and sailors and had survived hazards innumerable to find a quiet harbor! Not a flamboyant career, but splendidly competent as one reads between the lines. He was one of the pioneers, blood brother of the men who turned landward to tame the wilderness.

RALPH D. PAINE.

Durham, New Hampshire

April, 1925.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The following Biographical sketch; with a few of the incidents of my life, are committed to paper, for the gratification, and amusement of my beloved Grand-children. Considering the advanced age of the writer, on the brink of 75, it must be expected, there will be imperfections, of various kinds—the old mans trembling hand is conspicuous at first sight—but even that, may interest, when the reader reflect, that the hand which pen'd these lines, is now mouldering in Dust.

IN the year 1802, I was in Yarmouth, a sea port, in the East of England; and by one of those casual events of life, was favoured with an interview with an aged Gentleman, a Port admiral, by the name of Isaac Cobb—lea[r]ning, that I was an American, and my name Cobb, he expressed a desire to know the names of my ancestors, as far back as I could recollect; I could only give him, to my great Gr. Father Jonathan Cobb—he then told me, that it was clear to him, that my ancestor originated from Harwich in England, that he had been at the seat, where he was born, many times,—that

Elijah Cobb

Silvanus Cobb, had 4 sons. viz Jonathan, Eleazer, Silvanus, & Benjamin, that the two first named embarked for America in the May Flower* that Silvanus followed them some 2 or 3 years after; & that Benjamin remained with his Father untill he died, & then followed his Brothers to America.

He then produced a very lengthy Biography of several generations, & read many particulars of the Cobb families, and among them—that Jonathan, son of Silvanus, settled upon Cape Cod—Eleazer, somewhat further westward—& Silvanus, some distance north of Boston—and that I was, no doubt, a decendant from Jonathan.

The old gentlemen ordered his secretary, to make a copy, of such parts of the biography, as related to my ancestry, but circumstances obliged me leave, before I received it.

So much for Admiral Cobb.

I remember, perfectly well, when I had five Grand Parents alive, 4 on my Fathers side, & one, on my Mothers—viz. my Great G'd Father & g'd Mother Cobb—my Grand Father & g'd Mother Cobb, & my G'd Mother Freeman, my Mothers Mother, I cannot trace my ancestry beyond my

* I conclude the old Admiral, was mistaken here, as the name, Cobb, is not in her list of passengers, but I did not know it then—they, probably, came in the next vessel, the Cherub.

Ancestry

Great g'd Father Cobb—there were three, of his family, which I perfectly remember—viz. Jonathan, Eleazer, & Benjamin—the female part, I have no knowledge of—my G'd Fathers family consisted of 10 children, 6 sons, & 4 daughters, viz. Elijah, Scottow, Isaac, John, Seth, Elkanah, Mary, Sally, Hannah, Betsey—my Grandmother Freemans name was Mary, she was Sister to Rev^d. Nath^l. Stone the first ordained Minister in this Town, then Harwich—she married Barnabus Freeman, of eastham, he was a sea Captain, & died at about 40 years of age—my mother, was their only child, & was only 12 years old when her Father died—at 17 she marreid my Father, Scottow Cobb, their family consisted of 6 children, viz. Huldah, Barra, Elijah, Reliance, Judith, & Sally—three, have already paid the debt of nature; & the united ages of the three alive, is 224 years.

My Father persued a seafaring life for subsistence; was Master of a Brig, & died on his pasage from Cadiz to Quebec, in the 33^d year of his age—leaving my Mother with 6 infant children, the oldest but 10 years of age, and the youngest, born after Father left home, the last time,—For the support of this helpless flock; was a small cape cod farm, a small house & barn, and one cow—I have

Elijah Cobb

heard my Mother say, that she never received 100\$ for my Fathers effects—

Under such circumstances; it was not possible to keep the family together—to support & educate them, with the means in her power, was out of the question—some of us, must leave the paternal dwelling & seek subsistence among strangers—my Bro^r, being the Elder, was tried first, but wou'd not stay, & came home crying—I was then, in my 6th year, & altho" too young to earn my living, a place was offered me, & I left my dear mother for that subsistence among strangers which she could not procure for me.

I continued from my Mother, except at times visiting her, untill in my 13th year, when by an imprudent attempt, to lift beyond my strength, I broke a vessel in my stomach, which entirely disabled me; and I was sent home to my Mother, incapable of labour of any kind.

I remained with her; under the care of a skillfull Docter, about a year, when he advised me, to be sent to sea, as the best method to regain my health.

Accordingly, in the fall of 1783, I was fitted out for Boston, to look for a voyage—My whole wardrobe, was packed in a gin case, for a trunk; a tow bedsack, filled with rye straw, & a pair of,

Seeks a Voyage

home-made, blankets, for sleeping appuratis, with two bushels of corn, to pay my passage to Boston—and acquitted thus, I left the family circle, with buoyant spirits and in full confidence that I should work myself thro' life, with honour & credit—I embarked, at Skaket, in a small Schooner of only 25 Tons, called the *Creature*; & after going into Provincetown, & laying there during a gale of wind, we reached Boston, in about three days.

At the time, I am speaking of, there were more men, than could readily find employ, & frequently, the best of seamen, were destitute of voyages—several of our neighbouring young men, had been to Boston, that fall, previous to my leaving home, & had returned without getting employ, they told my Mother, that I would only spend the two bushels of corn, & return to her without getting a voyage—but their predictions were set at naught; for the first time I went down the long wharf, & stood gazing at a new vessel, wondering, & admiring her monstrous size, her great cables & anchors &c—a gentleman stepped from her deck & thus accosted me! My lad, do you want a voyage—. Yes Sir—will you go with me in this vessel—where are you bound Sir—to Siranam—I am told Sir, that all flesh die, that go there—well my boy, to prove, that you have not been told

Elijah Cobb

the truth, 'I have been there 13 voyages, & you see I'm alive yet—well Sir, I should like to go, what wages will you allow me—do you know how to cook—not much Sir, but I can soon learn—well my boy, if you think so, I presume you will, I like your candour & will take you, & give you the customary wages of a boy; half of Seamens wages \$3.50 p^r month, but you must go immediately on board, & git dinner for the men at work—& thus I commenced my duty as cook & cabin Boy.

When the men broke off work, at night, they all went away; the Cap^t then asked me, where my bed & cloaths were—I told him, on board the creture, in town dock—well, you must go & git them, & I'll keep ship untill you return, you must sleep on board to night—who else will sleep on board—nobody, there is no one belongs to the vefsell, except you & myself—not liking the idea of sleeping on board alone, I took the liberty of asking him, where his mate was—he said, he had not got one yet—I told him, I *gessed*, I knew a good man, that would like to go—who is he—I said, My Uncle, who came up, in the creture to look for a voyage—has he ever been mate—Yes Sir, & prise mastre too, in the war—well, you go after your things, & if you see your Uncle, ask him to come down & see me, in the morning when I got on

Voyage to Surinam

board the creture, my Uncle was there, and by way of a reprimand, asked, where I had been all day—why Uncle, said I, I have shipped myself, & I beleive I have got a voyage for you also.

To make a short story, my Uncle went down in the morning, & shipped & went the voyage.—I then wrote to my Mother, that I had got a voyage for myself & Uncle, & if those young men would come to Boston before I sailed, I would ship them off, rather than have them stay at home Idle, & upon expense all winter.

The vefsell was soon loaded, & we went to sea—my inexperienc, & being very sea-sick, for a while, rendered my situation very unpleasant, but I soon surmounted those deficulties; & began to injoy my new mode of life; after the opperation of David Jones's medecine (sea-sicknefs) I felt my health improved, & by the time we arrived in Surinam, I felt quite well, and I found I was able to give pritty good satisfaction in my line of duty.

My perticular attention to the officers, procured me some presents, by wh I was enabled to purchase a Barrel of molafses, & some fruit, for an adventure back to Boston.

Nothing meterial took place, during the remainder of the voyage, worth noting; we returned to Boston in the spring of 1784, discharged our

Elijah Cobb

cargo, mollasses, was paid our wages & seperated, each to home. My wages amouted to 21\$, & by the sale of my bbl of Molases, & some my fruit, I was enabled to git myself a new suit of sailors cloaths, from the Slopshop, & carried home, & put into my Mothers hands, 20 silver Dollars—probably, the largest sum of money she had possesd. since she had been a widow—& that, from her poor little sick Boy—her tears flowed freely, upon the occasion, but they were tears of gratitude to our heavenly Father, for his mercies to her child, in permitting his return home, in the injoyment of so much better health, than he left it—my own feelings, upon the occasion, can be better imagined than discribed.

I tarried at home but a short time, before I returned to Boston, in persuit of employ; & spent the summer, with a Cap^t. Lombard, in the coasting businefs. In the fall I shipped, as a common sailor, & made several voyages to the W. Idies—returning from a voyage, in Dec^r. 1786, I was informed that my Brother, had fallen from mast-head, in the Delaware Bay, had Broken both his legs, one thigh, & put out of joint, one shoulder—and was then, in the Pensalvinia hospital, with one leg amputated.

The Season was then so far advanced, that the

Brotherly Love

navigation, was about closing with Ice, consequently, I was compelled to relinquish my visit, to my unfortunate Brother, untill the spring opened the navigation.

Prehaps you will ask! why, G'd Father did not go on by land—but, my dear G. children, the mode of traveling then, was quite different from now, we had no railroads, no, steam conveyance, and scarcely, a carriage—even the mail, was carried upon horses—a stage coach was not known—

I consequently, engaged a birth, for the spring, with my uncle John Cobb, in the employ of Benja^a Cobb & Sons, of Boston, in the Philadelphia trade, went home, & attended School, about 2 months, when I was call'd upon, to go on to Boston by land to join the vefsell. I accordingly started, in company with 3 others, for the same object, & walked to Boston. We there joined the vefsell, loaded her, & saild for Philadelphia—on our arrival, I procured a permit, as soon as posible, & visited my poor Brother in the hospital—affectionate Brothers & Sisters, can better imagine, our feelings at meeting, than I can discribe it—suffice it to say, he was not well anough, to leave the hospital then, but t'was thought he wou'd be, by our next trip—our trips, only took up about a month, & ac-

Elijah Cobb

cording the next time, he came on with us to Boston, & I sent him home to our Mother.

I continued in the employ of B. C. & Sons, about a year, when they premoted me to the office of mate—and in that capacity I served them, under many different captains, between 6 & 7 years, untill I felt myself qualifi^d. to command a vefsel, & seeing no disposition on their part to indulge me, I left the employ; went to Baltimore, & made two voyages to Europe, in the capacity of 1st. mate of a ship—after which, I returned to Boston; and got the command of a Brig, in the employ of Edw^d. & Will^m. Reynolds—

After making several voyages, to Virginia, & one to the West Idies; in April 1793, I went to the cape, & got married; I was then in my 25th. year—. I continued in the employ of the Mefs^{rs}. Reynolds's; principally in the virginia trade, about two years longer, when they concluded to send me, on a voyage to Europe—their object was, to cadiz; but at that time, the algerines were at war with America; & it was reported, that their crusiers were outside of the streights of Gibaralter—in consequence, it was recommended that I should clear my vessell for Curruna, a northern port in spain, and there essertain, whether it would be safe, to proceed to Cadiz—I was however, spared

Captured by the French

the trouble of enquiry, by falling in, with a French Frigate, who captur^d, & sent me to France. x x x x & here commences my first trouble & anxiety, as a ship Master—having under my charge, a valuable vessel & cargo, inexperienced in business—carried into a foreign port, unacquainted with the language, no American counsel, or merchant to advise with—and my reputation, as a ship master, depending upon the measures I pursued &c &c.

The time, that I arrived in France, was during the french Revolution, and in the *bloody* reign of Robertspeire—all was anarchy & confusion—the galliotine, in continual operation, & their streets & publick squars, drenched with human blood—I minuted down, 1000 persons, that I saw beheaded, by that *infernal* machine; and probably saw, as many more, that I did not note down, men, women, preists & laymen, of all ages—and finally, before I left the country; I saw Robertspeirs head taken off, by the same Machine—But, to return to my individual, and embarised affairs—all my papers, relative to my ship & voyage, had been taken from me, on board the Frigate, at sea; I concluded they were put in possession of the prise Master, who brought me in, but he, was not to be found; neither could I find any clue to my papers,

Elijah Cobb

and without them, I could not prove, any demand for redrefs upon the government, for their violation of our neutrality—it was true, my vefsel was there; but her cargo, Flour & Rice, was taken out, & was daily made into bread, soups, &c &c, for the half starved, populace—and without papers, I could not, even substantiate my claim to an empty ship—they meerly condecended, to send me to a Hotell, to board; & those of my ships crew, that were sent in with me, were also, provided for.

In this very unpleasant perdicerment I remained about six weeks—I had, however, in that time, written to the american charge des affairs at Paris, & received an answer, but it contained nothing definite, he regreted my situation, & that of my countrymen generally, in France, & that it was owing to the disorganized state of affairs in the country; and that, I must exercise patiance, & the government wd. do what was right in time.

In about six weeks, as before observed, I was called upon, at my lodgings, by an officer, of the tribunal of commerce, bringing, a copy of the judgment, of said tribunal, upon my vefsel and cargo, & a linguister to explain it to me.

Thus, had they tried me, & passed sentence without my hearing, or even knowing that I was

A Promise to Pay

on trial—but, in that way, all business was managed in France at that time.

The decision of the tribunal, was, however, so favourable, that it gave a spring to my feelings, & a sensation that gave new life.

They declared, my vessel & cargo, to be neutral property; & that, as the cargo was at *my* disposition, I should be paid for it, by the government, at the prices that might be fixed upon, by myself & the agent of the government, and an adequate indemnification, for my capture, detention, expenditures &c &c

I was then waited upon, to the agent of marine, to sell my cargo; when it is presumed, there was not a pound, of the flour, or rice in existence—and after battling, in words, three days in succession, we fixed the prices, as follows, viz—Flour \$16.50, & Rice \$5.50—this, was a good beginning, being over 200 per cent on the invoice.

but a long altercation now ensued, relative to the payment—money, was out of the question, for if they had it, to pay, there was a law against bringing it away from the country—goods, also, were out of the question, as well as bills on England or America—finally, I agreed to take, government Bills of exchange, on Hamburg, payable 60 days after date, and was promised, by the

Elijah Cobb

Agent; that I should have my bills, in 12 or 14 days—I waited patiently a month, but no bills came; & finding that no confidence could be placed in their promises, & feeling doubtfull, as to obtaining any thing for my Cargo; I thought it advisable to send my vefsell home, under charge of the mate—consequently, I ballased her, & sent her away; writing to my owners, that I was determ^d. to persevere, untill I obtained satisfaction.

My mind being releived, from seing my vessell laying Idle, & at great expense; I came to the determination of going to head quarters, Paris—but many deficulties were to be surmounted, in order to attain this object—Ist. the road was dangerous to travail; the adherents of royalty, were reduced to mere scurmaging parties, that committed their depredations under cover of the night, in solitary places, upon travellers, & the peaceble inhabitants—and as all horses were taken into requisition by the government, except those that convey^d. the national dispatches; there was no other mode of travelling; and it was conterary to law, for them to take a pafsengers—but my mind was fixed upon going, as the only chance of ever accomplishing my businefs with the French government. I therefore called upon the Minister of Marine, & got an official copy, of my demands on the govern-

On to Paris

ment, and had them recorded (a precautionary measure) as I had lea[r]ned, that loseing a mans papers, was one of their methods of procrastination, to keep far off a settlement.

After this, I procured an interpreter, & waited upon *Jean Con. St. Andre*, a man, holding high offices under the Government, & reported to be, favourably disposed to Americans—to him I made known my situation—the treatment I had received, the praplexity I was in—& the necessity of going to Paris—& praying him, not only to grant me a pasport, but to grant a special permitt, to one of the Coureirs, to carry me there—after a long demur, with himself, & repeatedly feeling of his neck, to see how it would bear the knife; he returned a favourable reply—viz. that I must call upon him the next day, when he would make the necessary arrangments &c

Accordingly, in two days, I was underway for Paris, in one of the national coureirs with government dispatches, the Master of which, did not speak one word of English, & myself, but a few words of French, of course, we were not *very* sociable—we were furnished, each with a pair of pistals, with a blunderbus, loaded, in front, our carriage, was musquet shot proof, except in front; drove, by a postilion outside with from 5, to 9

Elijah Cobb

horses, according to the road, which at best, was very indifferent.

And thus we drove on, Jehu like, without stopping, except to exchange horses, & mail; taking occasionally, as we run, a mouthfull of bread, and washing it down, with some low prised, red Burgendy wine—as to sleep, I did not git one wink during the journey, of 684 miles. But *la maitre de les despach*, would sleep, during the day, pitching about the carriage, for the roads were very rough, to my very great anoyance—but, during the night, his anxiety kept *him* awake, through fear, altho” we had a guard, of, from 12 to 24, mouted horsmen each night, from sunset, to sunrise, to preceed, & follow—and as a demonstration, that the precaution was necessary, on the 2^d morning, after leaving Brewst, just before our gaurds left us, we witnessed a scene, that filled us with horror.—the remains, of a Coreir, laying in the road, the Master, the Postilion, & 5 horses laying dead, & mangled by it, & the mail mutalated & scatered in all directions. We were informed, afterwards, that the Coureir, was without an gaurd, that the evening previous; there was an alarm in the visinity, that had called out, all their fources to suprefs, consequently, at the last stage, there was none to supply; & it was death by law,

A Word of English

for national despatches to stop, therefore, the Master proceeded, without a guard, and met the fate, as discribed.

The next night, at about sun-setting we came to a stage, where we expected to receive our guard, & there was none for us, however, the next stage, was only five miles, & not considered very dangerous; we therefore proceeded on, atho" not without great anxiety; & preparation of our fire arms, in case of an attack.

In the very neat village of Alançon, in Normondy, I had the first, & only, word of English, sporken to me, during the journey, we stopped to exchange horses & mail, when the *Maitre*, as usual, was called to an account for having a passenger, & a foreigner too, in the Coureir; and while he was making his justification, shewing pasports &c; a man in a tattered uniform, came up to the door of the Carraige, & reaching out his hand, said in quite good english; for the love of God, my dear Sir, do permitt me to shake hands, with one, who comes from that country, where, the *great*, and beloved Washington resides—he only had time to say, 'that he went to America with, la Fayettee, and had the honour of having served under the *best man God ever made*, even the great Washington.

Elijah Cobb

Nothing interesting took place untill we reached Paris. It was at 4 ° Clock, of a beautifull June morning, that the Carriage stopped before the gate of Hotel de Boston, & the bell rung, having been just 74 hours from the gates of Brest—during which time, I had not lost myself in sleep, taken nothing warm upon my stomach, nor used water, upon either hands or face—thus covered with dust, & exhausted with fateague; I was received by the Porter, conveyed to a chamber, provid^d. with washing apparatus, where I soon freed myself from dust, applied clean linnen, and enscons'd myself in an excellent Bed, saying to myself, *soul take thine ease in sleep*—but, it appeared, that sleep had departed from me, I laid untill the clock struck 10, without being able to obtain a doze, & then rose, & attended, thro" the day, to finding out a train of my businefs, through the American Consul &c, retired to Bed again at 9 ° Clock, heard the Clock strike 12, and knew nothing after, untill 11 ° Clk the next day; when awoke, feeling like myself again; although I slept very sound the next night, for 9 hours without awaking.

After essertaining where to apply, my first object of attention was, to search for my Accounts,

Hope Deferred

sent on from Brest—the result was, they denied, at all the offices, ever having received them, or heard of such a Brig, as the *Jane*, nor of her commander, Capt. Cobb—well, “as I before observed, I prepared for this event, before I left Brewst; by procuring a copy of my Accounts &c &c, accordingly I laid an official set before them, and thus introducing the *Jane*, & her commander—I was told, to call the next day, & they would let me know, when my Bills wou’d be ready. I therefore, was obliged to exercise patience & wait; but when I called the next day, my papers were not to be found in the office—no one had put them away, no one could tell any thing about them—and finally, after a long French jabber, it was concluded, that they must have been left upon the counter, brushed off, & burned, among the lose papers.

This was too much, for my already perplexed, agitated, mind. I knew of no way, but to write back to Brest, for another set—& they, probably, wou’d meet the same fate, as the two preceeding ones had. I was now fully convinced, that the whole was designed, for the purpose of procrastination & putting off pay day as long as possible—but it was a severe trial for me, in my inexperienced state. I

Elijah Cobb

consulted with our consul; & with our Minister at the court of France, but the only satisfaction was; git another set of papers, & we will guard against another loss—

While seting, with writing materials before me in my chamber, in the act of writing for another set of papers—a French gentleman, who occopied the next room, & who spoke good English, passed my door; I asked him in, & related to him my greivances—after he had thought for a few moments; he advised me, to endeavour to obtain an interviw with Roberspeire, & make known to him my greivances; assuring me that he was partial to Americans, & had no doubt, but he would give me such advice as would be servicable to me—But, I asked, will he, the leader of this nation, condesend to listen to a private induvidual, & interpose, in meely, a commercial transaction—yes, if the businefs is managed right, I am confident he will. But, how shall I obtain an interviw—simply by writing him a billet yourself, in the republican stile, an American cetizen, to citizen Roberspeire, & send it by a servant of the Hotel, requesting an interview upon businefs.

After duly considering upon the subject, I wrote the following, & sent it by servant.

Interview with Robespierre

An American citizen, captured by a French Frigate on the high seas, requests, a personal interview; & to lay his greivances before citizens Roberspeire.

Very respectfully

E. COBB

In about an hour, I received the following note, in his own hand writing.

I will grant Citizen Cobb an interview to morrow at 10 A M.

ROBERSPEIRE

This, gave a spring to my feelings, and banished that deprefsiion which had held me in chains, for some days previous. I was puntual to the time—sent my name up, & was admitted into the presence of the great man. He pointed me to a seat without speaking; there was one man, only, in the Hall, an enterpreter, who told me that, Citizen Roberspeire wished me, to commence my relation, at the time of my capture, and to tell the whole, up to this time—I accordingly proceeded; and, thro” the interpreter, related my Capture & treatment, up to that time—upon my closing the detail; with a waive of Roberspeires hand, the interpreter left the hall, and he, R—e, began conversing with me, in very good English, questioning me, upon some perticcular points, of the former conversation; but

Elijah Cobb

more perticurly, about the losf of my papers, since I arrived in Paris—finally, he told me to call at an office, in Rue St^e Honorie, called the office of the 2^d department, & *demand* my papers, I told him, that I had been there repeatedly, & that I was forbid to enter the office again. upon my telling him that, he exclaimed. *Sacra coquin*—go, said he, to that office, & tell cetizen F. T., that you came from R—e, and if he does not produce your papers, & finish your business *immediately*, he will hear from me again, in a way not so pleasing to him. Observing at the same time, that he regreted that *his name* should be made use of, in a mercantile transaction, but that my case, absolutely demanded it.

I tendered my greatfull thanks for his services, & left him; after receiving his injunctions, to call & let him know how I succeeded—I went direct to the afores^d. office; and, by the previledge of making use of Roberspeirs name, I was kindly rec^d. an opology made, for former abuses, and my business compleated the next day—but as my exchanges were drawn, payable sixty days after date, & the tribunal had decreed, demurage &c, untill I received my Bills, I refused to receive them in Paris, as my pay wou'd then stop, but insisted on their being sent to the agent in Brest agreeable to

Various Pleasant Towns

contract—my object was, not to receive them until 12 or 15 days before they were due, consequently I remained in Paris about 3 weeks after my bills were sent to Brest. and during that time, the great man, who had so assentially befreinded me, was beheaded by the Galliotine.

This event, very meterially changed the aspect of affairs in France; my exchanges, which before, I could have readily sold at par value, now, would not bring 50^{cts.} on the dollar—this induced me, to go on to Hamburg with them myself & know the result; and having a desire to see more of the country, & could travell, principally, at the expence of the nation, having full time, before my bills wou'd become due—I took my seat in the accomodation stage for Burdeaux, visited that City, tarried 5 days, again started, visited Nantes, Loreong,* & various pleasant towns in La Vanda,† & arrived at Brest, 20 days before my bills were due.

The agent of Merine, exprefsed a little disapprobation at my not calling before for my Bills, having had them about 20 days—but I settled with him, quite amicably; and found a small vefsell, bound direct for Hamburg, in her, I secured a

* Lorient.

† La Vendée.

Elijah Cobb

passage, & embarked 3 days after. We had a long passage, but I arrived the next day after my bills became due.

And here, I will relate, one of those casual events, which frequently take place, to the benefit of man—the vessel in which I took passage, stopped at Gluxstad, a town on the river Elbe, about 30 miles below Hamburg; the Captain & myself went on shore, & engaged a carriage to take us up to the City; but night overtaking us before we reached it, the gates were shut & we could not enter (the gates were always shut at sunsetting, & upon no occasion, were opened until sun-rise) consequently, we turned back, about a mile, to the Danish city of Altona, where put up for the night, at a famous Hotel, & there I found a number of American ship Masters merchants &c; at the supper table, various questions were asked me, by which they learned that I was from France, that I came as a passenger; but I discovered that curiosity was *wide awake* to know my business—I, however, thought proper, to keep that to myself; having my fears, relative to my Bills—after rising from the supper table, a gentleman came to me, & asked me into his room; being seated; he introduced himself as follows.—I am Sir, an American, from New York, my name is Loyle, I noticed the curi-

Welcome Advice

osity of our countrymen, at the supper table, to know your business; & Sir, I was pleased to notice your prudent reservation, upon the subject—I do not ask you; but conjecture what it is, and if it is, as I think; I can be of service to you, by way of advice, probably.—my conjecture is, that you have French government Bills on their agent in Hamburg; if so, I advise you, to let no man know it, but go & present your demands, in person; otherwise, they will be protested; for their agent De chapeaurouge, has already been prosecuted, for paying French claims, I think, therefore, if you convince him, that no one but yourself, is privy to the transaction, that he may pay them. I tended to Mr. Loyle my thanks, for his information & left him, and the next morning, I entered the city, and by enquiry soon found the office of the said agent, & presented my Bill—he cast his eye upon it, without speaking, then gave me a very scrutinizing look, & said, how came you in possession of this draft—I received, Sir, from M. V. la Fontaine, Minister of Marine at Brest—did you receive it in person, or thro' other hands—I received it myself—has it been in your possession ever since—it has—who are your friends in this city—I have none, nor even a correspondent, nor ever was in the city before, & Sir, your office, is the

Elijah Cobb

first, & only building I ever entered in Hamburg, —where did lodge last night—I now told him, that I came a passenger from Brewst, that the vef-sell stopped at Gluxstaad, that I landed & hired a carriage to bring me to Hamburg, that we were too late to enter the city last night, that the driver landed me in Altona, at Lants's Hotel, where I lodged & Breakfasted this morn", that I came alone into the city, & by enquiry had found his office—He then observed, it is an unusual mode of negociating bills, it is generally done thro" some resident merchant, especially by a stranger, like yourself—I told him, that in so simple a transaction, as that of presenting a draft for acceptance, I felt myself competant to the task, and thereby save paying a commission—well, 'said he you have acted discreetly, took a pen & wrote accepted, across the face of the Bill—He then said; your money is ready for you; but this draft, must not go out of my hands again; for if it does, it never will be paid by me.

This embarrassed me extreemly; what could I do, with 40,000 crowns in silver, in my situation, an entire stranger, in a strange City.

After a moments reflection, I said to him, will you, Sir, give me your due bill, & allow me to receipt the draft—certainly, said he, I will; and ac-

The Ways of Providence

cordingly, it was done. This, I knew, was exchanging the obligation, of a great & powerfull nation, for that of a private induvidual; but I thought, that circomstances justified the Act.

I then asked him, if he would name to me, a house of entertainment, frequented by Americans, & he ordered a servant to conduct me to Lilbons Hotel—and thus closed the important interveiw with De' chapeaurouge; & I found his *due Bill*, as good as Cash.

Thus, how fortunate the circomstance of my interveiw with Mr. Loyle—but for his kind information & advice, I shou'd, no doubt, have put my draft, into the hands of the American Consul for collection; the consequence would have been, a protest; and another tour to France, to seek redrefs. And all this saved, by the Gates being shut before I reached them. How often, my dear Grand Children, do we repine and murmer, when disappointment, affliction, and trouble come upon us; & even distrust the goodnefs of our Heavenly Father; when we, very frequently, afterwards, realize that it was for our good.

It was somewhat so with me, I felt, very much put out, at the gates being shut, & chided the driver for his dilatorynefs, when he knew the city gates closed at sun-sett—but this very circom-

Elijah Cobb

stance, was the means, of freeing my mind from a burden, which had weighed it down for months,—it was the means of a happy, and prosperous termination of my labourous voyage—for nothing now remained to be done, but to remitt the funds to T. Dickerson & Sons, London; & to take pafsage for Boston myself, & give an account of my stewardship to my employers. And all this, I could do, with bouyant sperits, having made them an excellent voyage.

I was not long in closing my businefs in Hamburg, & took pafsage for Boston in the ship Warren, Cap^t. Hodgkins, where we safely arrived after a pafsage of 54 days.

My arrival, gave great relief to my owners, for, from the accounts they had from France, they doubted the validity of my Bills on Hamburg, & expected I wou'd have to return to France.—

The fortunate close of this tedious voyage, and my return; being the first instance of the kind, under the then state of things in France, produced, no small, excitement among the merchants of Boston, who had property in France; and applications was continually made to me, for all the whys & wherefores, relative to the fortunate result of my businefs; and the consequence was, it added greatly to my fame, as a ship master.

Another Voyage to France

Another voyage was immediately planed, by my owners for France, & I was only allowed a very few days, to visit my family,—although, our first child (now Aunt Sampson) was but 24 hours old when I left home—when I return'd, could say, *my par*. But short, ended, was the time allotted me, for injoying the objects of my affection, I must leave them; and persue the road marked out, for obtaining that subsistance for myself & family, which nature required, and reason dictated.

After staying at home 4 days only, I returned to Boston, fitted out my vefsel, & sailed for Alexandria, & there purchased a cargo of Flour & sail'd for France—on my arrival in Harvre de grace; I found that government purchased all the flour that came to market Consequently, I sold my cargo to the governments agent, at 20 crows p^r bbl, under a promis, that I sho'd have my pay, in 40 days after delivery.

But I found, to my sorrow, that no confidence could be placed in their pledges; & that I was again subjected, to a tedious altercation with the agent & his government. After dancing attendance upon them about 2½ months, my vefsell, at the same time, laying Idle & at a great expence, I again concluded to send her home, under charge

Elijah Cobb

of the mate, & stay myself, & fight it out. Accordingly, I dispatch^d the Brig, & went on to Paris, prepared for the seige & expecting a long one.

In about two months more, I received, about one third of my demand, in Ingots of silver, & made a trip over to London, & deposited their amount with, Bird, Savage, & Bird; subject to my owners order—I then returned to France, and renewed my claim for the remainder.

And after about three months more of attendance, upon the government of France, I received the ballance due me; about 40,000 Crowns—here, probably, you will conclude that my anxiety terminated. But, on the conterary, it was, if possible, increased.

I had attained the object of 10 months contention with the french government—I had on hand, a fine voyage for my employers—but the great deficulty now was; how I should git the property out of France. There was a special law, against exporting *specie* from the country,—exchanges were not to be obtained, in which my confidence coul'd be placed; my vefsell gone, so that, investing in goods, was out of the question,—and 40,000 crowns in my sleeping chamber, brought there publickly, at noon day.

Thus situated, you may judge, whether my

Brings Back Gold

mind could be at ease—however, after having taken the necessary precautionary measures against robbery, or theft; I went to work, & purchas^d all the *foreign Gold* I could find; in order to git the value, into a smaller bulk, for the purpose of smuggling it out of France.

After about two months; by my agents, in Paris & Roen, & my own, in Harvre de grace, I succeeded in converting my 40.000 crowns, into less than 3000 peices of gold, prinsapally, Spanis doubloons—this had been done, in as secret a manner, as posible.—I then, went to a village, about 3 miles, & ordered 2 leather belts made, of a sufficient size to hold 8 or 9 hundred peices, and after puting each peice, into a wrapper of silk paper, I stowed my belts, & stiched it, in such a manner, that there could be no motion of the peices—the two belts contained 1700 peices—the remainder, I made up into wads, of about 50 peices each, inveloped in paper, & cloth.

I then engage my pafsage for Boston, in the ship Caroline, Cap^t Cutter, and after two or three days, the ship hauled out of the bason, and stopped opposite the custom house, and within Six rods of my Lodgings; having free exces to the ship, at all times, I soon decided, in my mind, how to dispose of my money, not, contained in the two belts;

Elijah Cobb

and in a short time, it was safely & secretly stowed away on board the ship. On the morning of the day, on which the ship was to sail, I made interest with the ships Steward, to put one of the Belts round his waist, by the promis of a guinia, & wear it, untill we were clear from the peir head, the other belt, I secured to my own person,—and thus curcomstanced I had to submitt to the ssearch of 8 french officers at the head of whom, was an old experi-^d. Ssearcher, who strongly suspected that there was money on board.—But notwithstanding all, I got off clear with my money, and after a pafsage of 35 days, I had the satisfaction of delivering it to my owners in Boston.

On my return home, I found that my pertner, in lifes voyage, had run me in debt, for a cape Cod farm; and as the place was distitute of a suitable building, for the accommodation of our little family, it was thought advisable to proceed to errect one, the following season; I consequently, felt myself under the necessity of declining businefs, in the sea-faring line, and attend to that of a more domestic nature, for a while—I remained at home, from August 1798—untill Sept^r 1799—and, as the events of this year, are something remarkable, I will name a few of them.

This year 1799, the beloved Washington, the

Commands the Monsoon

Father of our Country died,—this year, our first son was born—this year I took possession of the farm, built my house, and the family moved into it on new years day 1800.

In Octo^r. 1799 I took charge of the Brig Mary, went to Savannah, in Georgia, from that to Lisbon, from thence to London, to Rotterdam, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, and back to Boston—and performed the voyage, in 8 months & 4 days—

After remaining at home, a short time, I received a letter, offering me the charge of a new ship called the Monsoon, I accordingly repaired to Boston & took charge of her—she was owned by the following company; Mess^{rs}. Hayden & Baxter, Mr. Joshua Hall, & Jacob Tidd, they put on board a valuable Cargo, & ordered me to find a Market for it in some part of the north of Europe, but as I had, in the cargo, a quantity of American Rum, they recommended that I shou^d touch into Ireland, upon the supposition that if I cou^d obtain permission to land it that it would command a high price.

I accordingly made the best of my way for Cork, and after a passage of 26 days arriv^d. at the Cove of Cork, this was meerly a harbour, & a village of a few thousand inhabitants—I landed &

Elijah Cobb

proceeded for the City, which was about 12 miles above; called upon the House of Jn^o. & Isaac Carrel & Co. to whom I had a letter of introduction—they received me very politely, but doubted my obtaining permission to land the rum, even if I was willing to pay foreign duty. They, however, went with me to the custom house, to consult with the collector, who, I found was in favour of landing it; but dare not give permission, without consulting his superiors in office, and said he wou'd attend to it & essertain in a few days.

I returned on board my ship in the evening, & found her in possession of 3 custom house officers, seized, ship and Carg, with the Kings seal upon her hatches—when I enquired the cause, I found it was for having on board sperits, not of the growth & manufactory of the British plantations—I called upon the deputy collector who ordered the Seizure of the ship—& he appeared so pleasant upon the subject that I felt quite a releif. I consequently return'd to the city, & called again upon the Collector,

He told me, I would have to apply *in person*, to the Admirallity of Dublin relative to the Seizure of the ship—& he at the same time he wou'd write them relative to landing the sperits. I consequently, post'd of for the City of Dublin a jour-

In Ireland

ney of about 200 miles, & arrived there without accident; much amused in traveling thro' the hart of Ireland, and observing the Irish people, in their symplicity of manners, and to appearance, almost, in a state of nature I called upon the board of Admirallity and after a lengthy investigation, & I employed council, twas found, that the ship & cargo, was forfeited to the crown, and was ordered fourthwith, to be adverti^d & sold at publick Auction—. It was (however) intimated to me (in private) this was intended as a *shem*, & that I wou'd have liberty, to buy ship & Cargo at my own price—& so it proved; for when I returned to Cork, I found the ship advertised, to be sold in 3 days, I appeard at the time & place, ship & cargo, with all appertunances, were set up together, to be sold for Cash down, some one, freindly to me, bid 2/6—I then bid 5^s/. and the whole was struck off to me—and thus, I was again in pofsession of ship and Cargo,

Finding no prospect of obtaining permifsion to land the rum, I concluded to proceed elsewhere for a Market for my Cargo, and was advised to try the Island of Geurnsey—& therefore applied to the custom House, to clear the ship, which was readily complied with; the collector, observed to me when about taking leave, Cap^t. Cobb, I must

Elijah Cobb

confess, I think your usage has been something rough here; and I shou'd not blame you, if you was to help yourself a little, in the way of smuggling.—no Sir said I, but wou'd you not be one of the first to make a prize of me therefor—oh said he, I shou'd have to do my duty—well Sir, said I, when you *Catch'em* you *Hab'em* God blefse you said he, & thus we parted, and the next morn" I sail'd; matters were, however, so arraigned, that between the cove of Cork, & the Scilly Islands, that I hove overboard Eight hogheads of N. E. rum, and a pilot boat sheer'd along side, and hove on board a small bag, which I found contained 264 English guineas—and although I saw them pick up, & hoist on board the 8 hhds of rum, *I was satisfied.*

I then proceeded for my Port of distination, Geurnsey, an Island in the channel of England, which had always been a free port, & a resort for Smugglars.—I anchord in the roads about the suns setting, & having a letter of introduction, from a friend in Cork, to a merchant there; altho" the hour was an improper one, *the dusk of Eve*", to deliver a letter of introduction I took my boat & went on shore, being an entire stranger, I had to make enquiries—but finally, in about an hour, I found the Gen^m. to whom the letter was ad-

A Hurried Departure

dressed,—he rec^d. me with politeness, and read the letter—I apologised for calling upon him, at so unseasonable an hour; he promptly replied, it is fortunate for you, that you have thus done.—I am now Sir compelled to act a part, which not only appears *uncivil*, but almost to an insult. Viz, that you return immediately on board your ship, and leave this port. He then, in a few words, told me that, the British parlement, had recently, passed revenue laws, that affected that Island; & that, two English cutters, had that day arrived, to enforce the laws; & that I shou^d certainly have trouble, with my cargo, if I was not off, before sun rise, the next morning.—I accordingly bid the gentleman good bye, repaired to my boat, which was waiting for me at the wharf, went on board the ship, & immediately got underway and at sun rise, the next morn, I was out of sight of the Island of Geurnsay up channell, on my way for the City of Hamburg.

Thus ended my deficulties of that voyage—I arrived safe in Hamburg, found a good Market for my cargo, loaded my ship, & returned to Boston, having made a good voyage to all concern'd.

My employers were so well pleased with the trade, I had opened in Hamburg; that they planned another voyage immediately, and tho^t

Elijah Cobb

they cou'd hardly afford me time to visit my family at the cape. However, by promis's of a short stay, I came to Brewster; saw my family, and returned to Boston to fit out the ship, for another Voyage in which, it was concluded, that it wou'd be for the Interest of the Voyage, that on my arrival in H—^g I should land my Cargo, load the ship with a return cargo, & send her home by my Mate, & remain in Hamburg myself thro' the Winter, to sell the cargo then landed, and prepare another for the ship, on her return to me in the spring.—under the foregoing arrangement, I sailed for Hamburg a 2^d time; arrived there after a common passage, landed my Cargo, loaded the ship, with Russia & German goods, and sent her for Boston, under the command of my mate, David Nickerson.

She sailed, the last of September, and by the middle of Nov^r, we were compleatly bound in fetters of *Frost*, and, in that high Latitude, we had only about 7. hours day light in 24. but there was no lack of *amusements*, to please the eye, tast, or mind, & I enjoyed myself very well, untill the last of Dec^r. when I received a letter, which came overland, by way of Holland, from one of my employers, in which it was stated in a, Postcrip, *Your wife has been very Sick, but, I beleive, she*

Anxiety and Illness

is better. This unwellcome intilgence; the uncouth manner, in which it was conveyed to me; and the great uncertainty of hearing any thing more, untill the ship returned to me; put my mind into a perplexing state of anxiety, which bid defiance to all injoyment of life.

Within a few days, as I entered the coffee room, of the Hotel, one morning, the servant said to me; there is an american Newspaper, which arrived last evening, by way of London,—I took up the paper, and first thing that attracted my notice, was my *Brothers death*—Thus the mind, already bowed down with anxiety; was obliged to receive this *heartrending* addition to its already overcharged burden, but, our heavenly Father, lays no more upon his children, than, He knows, they can bear.—for in addition to my afflictions then, I was attacted with the *brain* fever, and with such severity, that for 8 days, I was unconcious of either pleasure, or pain.—but I was, finally, permitted to recover, with the loss, only, of my full head of black hair; but I got over that deficuty *pritty* well, by substituting a Wig, and have been obliged to wear one ever since, to keep my head warm.—but notwithstanding all, I was supported thro” the winter, my business, by the help of merchants, Brokers &c, went on well; and when the ship ar-

Elijah Cobb

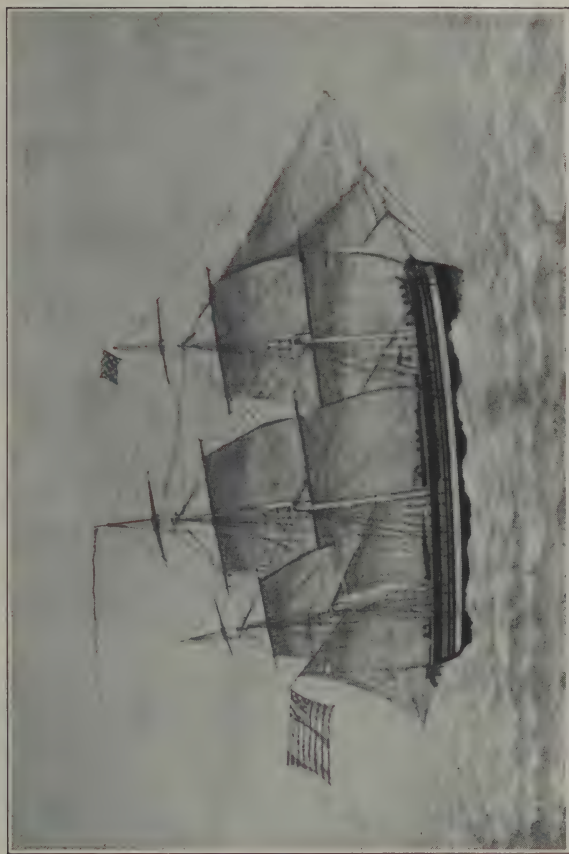
rived; about the 20th of May, I was ready prepared for her; and the news she bro^t me, from my family, was a cordial to my lacerated feelings.

As soon, as the Cargo which the ship bro^t out, cou'd be sold; the arrangements made, during the winter, were such, that we were soon ready for returning to Boston,—I reach'd home in Aug^t, having been absent something over 14 months, found Mrs C. very feeble, but convalescent.

I made one more voyage to Hamburg, in the Monsoon, & when I return'd she was sold; which gave me an opportunity of spending a few weeks at home, with my beloved family.

But, it was not long, before I received a letter from Mr. J. Tidd, who was one of my former owners in the Monsoon, requesting me to come to Boston fourthwith, as there was a new Brig for sale, which he had an idea of purchasing, and wished for my opinion &c &c.—I accordingly went to Boston, & the Brig, Sally & Mary, was purchased, and another Hamburg voyage was plann'd fourthwith.

Mr. Tidd, had put on board a valuable cargo; on his own account & risk, and ordered me for Hamburg; and I accordingly proceeded for the river Elbe; it being in the summer season, I took the more direct passage; of north about, so called,



Ship Ten Brothers.

The Blockade

viz. between the Okney & Shetland Islands, into the North sea, at the S E part of which, the river Elbe comminces; Hamburg is 110 miles above—I had heretofore, always obtained a Pilot, before I reach'd the entrance of the river—but now, none appeared, and I saw, at anchor, in the mouth of the river, one large ship, & 2 or 3 smaller vefsell's—it struck me, at once, that the Elbe, was blockaded, but I had no alternative but to proceed on & know, I accordingly, run on, untill within about a mile of the largest ship, when I came to an anchor.—she immediately sent her boat on board, for me & my papers,—I found the commander, a *haughty, crabbed, self willed*, Scotchman.

He insisted upon it, that I knew of the blockade; and that I intended a breach of it; of course, I was a good prize, & he shou'd send me to England, very well! I had to submitt to his superior force; and I was accordingly ordere'd for Yarmouth in England.

On my arrival there, my papers were sent to London, to the Kings advocate for adjudication; but they were return'd in 6 days, & I was pronounced clear, to proceed to any port that was not blockad'd and I put to sea the next morning.

As I cou'd not go to Hamburg, I concluded, that Copenhagen, would be, the next *best* market

Elijah Cobb

for my Cargo, and I accordingly, steered my course for that port.—On my arrival there, I was advised, by a freindly, Danish Merchant, to proceed to *Lubec*, one of the, *Hans Towns*, of Germany, about 100 miles South of Copenhagen, on the great Belt, so called, from which place, an inland canal, communicated with Hamburg, where my Cargo cou'd readily be sent, in defiance of the Blockade; and as my Cargo, was perticularly selected for the Hamburg Market, this was a very important object with me.

I consequently proceeded for Lubec where I arrived in about 48 hours., and was told; that I displayed the first American flag; ever wafted over their City.—on approaching the Town, an entire stranger, I recolected, that, on my last voyage to Hamburg—a Mr. Smidth, of the Firm, of Smidth & Plesing, of Lubec, had made a shipment of 100 peices of Duck by me, which I had sold, & made returns to them.

I was now glad to enquire them out, and avail myself of their services in selling my cargo, & purchaseing another on my return &c &c.—I very readily found them; and received from them all those kind attentions, to me, and my businefs; so greatfull to a Stranger. A great part of my cargo, went thro" the canel to Hamburg, and also, much

Orders in Council

of my return cargo, came in the same way,—but I found a good Market; got quick dispatch, and returned to Boston with an excellent voyage.

After discharging my cargo, in Boston, I visited my dear family, at the cape; where I found an additional pledge of affection, in a little black-eye'd daughter, which we call'd Mary P, then 69 days old—it being in the night, & no light in the house, I hawl'd her out of Bed, and held her up to the window to look at her by moonlight.

I was not permitted to remain, but a short time, in the enjoyment of the family circle; before I receiv'd a letter, saying, that another voyage was planned, & I must come forward. I accordingly, went on to Boston, & found they had began loading the Brig, for a voyage to Malaga.—the loading was soon compleated, and all necessary preperations made; and I saild for the Medeter-enaen., on the 15th. of Dec^r. 1807, & arrived at Malaga, Jan^y 11th. 1808. On my arrival, I was informed that the *celebrated British orders in council* went into fource, *there*; the 10th. Int^t, the day before I arrived.—those orders, forbid american vefsell, taken a return cargo from any ports in Europe, under the penalty of being a prize, in any English port.—in consequence of this, we knew, that *wines, & fruit*, wou'd rapidly advance in

Elijah Cobb

price, in America; which made a return cargo, very desirable.

The *American Consul*, with whom I advised, thought, if I got quick dispatch there wou'd be but little risk in my taking a return cargo; that he wou'd obligate himself, to dispatch me in 10 days with a full cargo of wine & fruit—and I finally concluded to take the risk.

I accordingly proceeded in discharging my cargo, & in receiving on board wine & fruit in return, & in 8 days was ready to sail—in order to succeed in escaping an investigation, & probably, a capture, by the English, I tho^t to wait for a strong easterly wind, and to improve the night, to make a run through the *Gut of Gibralter*, where lay the greatest danger of capture, or detention,—I accordingly waited the first Easterly wind & left Melaga, calculating to reach the rock of Gibralter, about Dark, the same Eve", which I did, but unfortunately as I approach'd it, the wind died away, & by time I had pass'd it, it was nearly calm—knowing that if it remained so thro the night, that daylight would expose me to Fort & their cruizers, & that I should surely be exposed to examination, & detention, I thought it advisable, to proceed to Anchorage with what wind I had—and I immediately haw[1]ed into the Bay, for the neutrial

Detained at Gibraltar

ground, but the wind being a head, I had to make a tack under the Spanish shore, & while standing over for the rock, was boarded by the boat of an English Fregate, under the command of a midshipman, who took charge of me, under pretence that I was bound into Algaziras—after we had come to anchor, altho 12 o’Clock at night, he insisted upon taken me on board the Frigate with my papers—well I was conducted on board & before an officer, who questioned me, I told him the truth, that I was from Malago, bound to Boston, that I had come in there to avail myself of a clearance from a British port, & a convoy thro the gut—well ‘said he, a convoy will sail, the day after to morrow, & ordered the officer to carry me on board my vefsell again immediately. I went on shore the next morn” & call^d. upon the American consel, to whom, I made know my true situation—he told me, he thought there was but little chance for me, as I was compleatly under the *Orders in Council*.—I left the consul & in the street, fell in with an old acquaintan[ce], to him also, I told my greivance—he advised me, as a last resort, & as my situation was not generally known, to endeavour to effect a clerance by bribery; & he gave other advice & information upon that subject.

I accordingly went on board, got my papers, put

Elijah Cobb

a couple of ounces of spanish gold into my pocket, & went on shore & directly to the office, on the Key; I found only the *Principall* in the office—I told him, I commanded an American vefsell was from Malaga, bound to Boston, and had put in there, to obtain a clearance, & a convoy thro the Gut—well ‘said he, as you say, you have a cargo on board, there are some serious questions to ask, previous to your obtaining a clearance.—I know, I know Sir, but do not be too perticular, give me a clearance, & at the same time, I laid on the counter before him, *two ounce peices of gold*—well’ but said he, if I give you a clearance you have another office to git signed at, well ‘said I, if you will give it, there will be more deficulty—& as I spoke a gentleman came into the office, to whom the first observed—this Captain was about going up to your office with his clearance, will you be so kind as to save him the trouble by signing it here, oh yes, said he cheerfully, accordinly, in a few minuits my clearance was compleated, the fees of both offices paid, & I was in the street, making a streight wake towards the American consuls—when I entered his office, he, with a long face said, I am glad to see you, but greatly regret your situation—I took my clearance from my pocket, & held it before his eyes—*Good God* said he, how

Escapes from the Convoy

did you git that—said I—ask me no questions, & I will tell you no lies—

The Signal Gun was fired, at sun-rise, the next morn” for the convoy to weigh, & I was one of this first to move—for I was full of fear, that some incident might *yet* subject me to the *fatal* investigation, I was therefore desirous to git out of their reach; a large English merchant ship, showing a teir of guns, streched over for the Barbary coast, & I followed her, under easy sail; *our* *convoy*, a gun Brig, was not then under-way and in watching her motion, I discovered a boat after us, full of men, roughing,* & sailing—I immediately felt jelious, *they are after me*, I ordered sail immediately put on, & in a very short time, the boat *give up* & put back for Gibranter—I then felt antious fearing the convoy might have orders to bring me back; but I heard nothing more, parted from the convoy off cape *Trafelgar*, & proceeded home.

I have mention’d a boat that was after me—sometime after I arrived home, I fell in with a Cap^t Mills, whom I left in Malaga, in a Brig belonging to Boston, & persueing the plan I had done, he saild from Malaga the day after me, was

* [rowing. *Ed.*]

Elijah Cobb

taken into Gibrater the night before I left—seeing me underweigh, without reflection, he observed there is Cobb, why is he allowed to go—the boat was immediately dispatch'd after me—but, by my vigilance in making sail, in season, & being favoured with a good stiff breeze I was enable'd to keep clear of them.—

I was favoured with a good pafsage, and arrived safe in Boston, a subject of the most intent speculation; how it was managed to clear out, a *cargo of Spanish goods*, from Gibralter, under the *British orders in Council*.—But, I had made a good voyage for all concerned, & return'd to my family.

I remained but a short time with my family, when I received a letter from Mess^r Bixby, Valintine & co, requesting that I would go on to New York, & take charge of a Ship, belonging to them, called the W^m. Tell, for a voyage to Europe—accordingly, I went to Boston, and after receiving instructions from my Owners, I took the stage for N. York and took charge of Ship, & fitted her, with all posible dispatch for sea—I then proceeded to Alexandria in Virginia, where I loaded the ship with Flour, and went for Cadiz, in Spain, where I sold my Cargo, Ballasted the ship with stones, and returned to Norfolk in Virginia—where I

Mr. Madison's Embargo

found letters from my Owners with provisions, from Boston, for another voyage, and orders to go up to Alexandria & load—but, as a part of my crew wished their discharge and others were to be shipped to supply their places, a few days detention was unavoidable—

While this process was in operation, a most violent *storm* came on, & as I had discharg'd the most of the crew, I was on board the Ship, assisting in securing the ship to the Wharf, when Mr. Fisk, the Merchant with whom I advised, came down the wharf & told me, that he had just received a *dispatch* from Mr. Randolph, in Congress, saying to him, *what you do, must be done quickly* for the embargo will be upon you, on Sunday at 10 A M.—it was now Friday P. M., & a violent storm, well," said Mr. F, what can we do Cobb, why said I, if we can hold the ship to the wharf, while it blows so hard, I shall be glad—We can, however, see, where we can get the cargo, & if it is fair to-morrow much may be done—In fact much must be accomplish'd in order to effect our object *viz. to cheat the Embargo*. We had about 100 Tons of stone Ballast on board, which must be landed, upward of 3000 bbls of Flour, to take in and stow away, provisions, wood & water to take on board, a crew to ship, to clear at the custom H.

Elijah Cobb

and, to git the ship to sea, before the embargo gits possession—and all this must be done, between Saturday morn” at day light, & sunday morn at 10 o’Clock, in the month of Dec^r.—We found, upon enquiry, that, we cou’d have our supply of Flour from a block of stores, direct along side of the Ship, & by giving 3/8th of a dollar extra, we had liberty, if stopped by the embargo, to return it—

Saturday morning, was fine weather I had given instructions to the mates, to have purchases up, at each hatchway, the ship having three—to discharge ballast, at the main hatchway, & to receive Flour forward, & abaft, with two gangs of Stevidore in the hold—at about Sunrise, I went up to *lazy corner*, so call’d, & presed every Negro into my service, that came upon the stand, & sent them on board the ship, untill I thought there were as many, as could work.

I then visited the Sailors boarding houses, where I shipped my crew, paid the advane to their landlords, & took their obligations to see each sailor on board, at sun-rise the next morning.—It had now got to be about 12 o’Clock & the ship must be cleared at the Custom house at, or before, one—I accordingly prepared a Manifest & went to the Custom house to clear the Ship—M^r. Taylor, the

A Feat of Loading

collector, knowing my situation, with the ship; *said* why Cobb, what is the use of clearing the ship, you cannot git away, the embargo will be here at 10 to morrow morning, & even if you git your ship below, I shall have boats out that will stop you, before you can git 3 leagus to sea. Said I, "*Mr Taylor*, will you be so kind as to clear my Ship—Oh yes' said he, I cannot refuse, (untill the embargo arrives; & accordingly the ship was cleared & I returned on board, & found all things going on well.—finally—to shorten the Story—at 9 that evning, we had on board 3050 Barrels of Flour, our long boat on board in the chocks, water, wood, & provision on board & stowed, a pilot engage, & all in readiness for Sea.

The tide wou'd serve at 8 °Clock on sunday morn, & we could not go before, & at 10 the embargo was expected—well, "the morn" arrived, the sailors were bro^t on board by their Landlords, the pilot came on board, & at 8 °Clock we started with a fair wind, down a crooked nerrow river, but the wind dying, our progrefs was Slow, & when we entered Hampton roads, it had got to be after 11 °Clock, and nealy calm—feeling anxious, I kept a sharp look out a stern, & with my glaſs, I saw about 12, a boat comeing down, under the full opperation of sails & oars—well,' said I, to the

Elijah Cobb

mate, I fear, we are gone—but very soon I saw, to appearance, a fresh breeze coming off from the South shore, I saw that the boat, had already taken it—I then ordered all the light sails set, ready to receive the breeze.—when it reached us, the boat was so near, that with my glafs I trace the features of the men—but in 10 munuites after I took it the boat give up the chace & turn'd back, and I went to sea without further molestation.—

By the pilot, I wrote my Owners, informing them of my running away from the Embargo, & then proceeded on for Cadiz, & carraied to that port the first news of the Embargo.

Flour was selling, on my arrival at \$16.00 but in consequence of the Embargo, & the war then rageing in that vicinity, the flour holders had a meeting, & agreed to raise the price of Flour to \$20.00.—& finally, altho" I waited some time I obtained that price for my Cargo.—

Soon after my arrival, I rec^d. a letter, by a vef-sell under Sweedish colours, adviseing me to bring home money, providing there was liberty to export it; & finding, upon enquiry, that was the case, I immediately took out a license from the custom house, to export \$72,000, having funds here, of last voyage,—but before I got ready to sail I heard of the repeal of the orders in Council, &

Spoken off the Grand Banks

also, of the *Milan* & *Berlin* decrees, & beleiving this would have a favourable effect, to America, in our Exchanges, & finding I cou'd buy British government Bills, at a great discount, I concluded to give up my Licinse, & remitt my money to England,—(I mention this circomstance to shew, how fortunate it was—as I was captured, on my return, if the Monney had been on board, we shou'd have lost it.—The day before I sailed I dine'd in a large party, at the american consul, & it being mention'd that I was to sail the next day, I was congratulated, by a British officer, upon the safety of our Flagg.—well" I tho't the same, when at the same time, the *War* between England & America was then raging.

I sail'd from Cadiz, the 5th. day of July 1812 bound for Boston, & I never felt myself saffer, on account of enemies on the high seas,—I had just entered upon the eastern edge of the grand Bank—at day light, of the morn" of the 17th I went on deck; we had a light breeze of wind from the north, with all sails sett, that would draw, in casting my Eye to windward, I saw a sail, to appearance, bearing down directly for us—not having spoken any thing, I told the mate, to back the maim yard & would speak her, we accordingly did; & at sunrise I ordered the Insign hoisted, at the

Elijah Cobb

Mizen peak; no sooner were our colours up, than his went up in the smoke of a gun, I saw that she was a Schooner, under English colours, & that she was armed; but did not alarm me, I continu^d. to lay by, she run down acrofs^t. my stern, with the usual hail, of, where from, where bound, how long out, &c &c—& he concluded from my replys that I did not know that war existed; he said to me, very mildly, I will thank you to continue laying by, & I will send my boat on board—Seeing she was a cutter Schooner with 10 brafs Guns, I, of course, acquiesced, & her boat came on board, with two petty officers, rowed by *only* two men—One of the officers requested me to go on board the cutter with my papers; well” I asked the 2 officers below, while I shifted myself and got my papers; while I was in my statroom, one of them, says to me, Capt^t, ‘what cargo did you carry to Cadiz? Flour,’ you got a good price, I presume Yes,’ said I—got Cash on board I suppose? No, said I, I remitted my money, to England,’ well,” said he, You’ve a fine ship here! Yes, toloble—what,” said he do you think she’s worth—this question, roused my curiocity, I step’d to the door of the Stateroom, & looking the man in the face, said to him, have you an Idea of buying, or taking the ship, Oh, said he, Captain, you’l excuse our in-

On Board the Cutter

quisitiveness, it was without meaning.—When I was ready, one of the officers went in the boat with me, & the other, remained on board the ship—I was received on board the cutter, & conducted into the cabin, to the Cap^t.—he received my papers, & looking them over, ask'd, if I had not a Clearance from Cadiz; I told him I had, but, I did not [know] it wou'd be required, & I had not bro^t it, well," said he, I must have it; if you'l send your boat Sir, I will go & look it up, I think its in my writing desk,—well," said he, send for your desk, I told him I was unwilling to do that, as it contained papers of consequence to me, & by accident it might be droped overboard—oh said he, I'll make good all damages, you *must* send for it. well," I wrote a line to the mate, to send my. W. Desk, it was brought into the cutters cabin, & having my keys in my pocket, I open'd it, & soon found the paper required,—my writing standing upon the Table open, & the officers standing round, they began looking at papers, among them, was a small bundle of letters directed to the Commissary Gen^l on the *Quebec Station*, they open'd it, & broke the seal of one of the letters—; upon which I look'd at the Cap^t, & observ'd, that this was treatment which I had not anticipated, from the British flagg; the Capt observ'd, you must submitt,

Elijah Cobb

we will explain ourselves bye. & bye about this time, the word came from the decks, *a Strange sail in sight*, & the Capt, drop'd the paper from hands, & run on deck.—I set still & look'd at the officers, overhawling, & deranging my papers in my writing desk.—after a while the Capt came down below; & said to me, Captain; you have exprest some surprise at our investigation, at which, I am not at all supprised, for I find, you are ignorant of a fact, which will justify, our proceedings with you, *We are at War with America*—now Sir, said I I beleive you are disposed to *tantalize*, for I do not beleive it.—Well,” Sir, said he, we will not alticate upon this subject; & he step'd to a desk took out a newspaper, & pointed me to the declaration of War, & danced on deck again, to look at the Strange sail.—the paper that he handed me, was an American paper, only 12 days old—after reading the declaration of war, I look'd it over for other news, untill the Capt came down.—He then said to me, well Sir, what think ye now—I told him, I was satisfied, as to *war*, but, I shou'd like to know now, whether *I* was to be *hung*, or *drowned*.

He smilling said, “well,” I beleive nither, *by me*.—I will now, said he, explain to you the reasons, for our conduct toward you; I am said he—from Halifax, bound to England with dispatches

The Frigate

for Gov^t, I cannot take you, not having men to man you, if I had found money on board I shou'd have taken it out, & have put one man on board, that might not be call'd piracy & have let you have taken your chance—but as it is you can take charge of your ship, & do the best you can—the sail coming down, is an American Frigate, & if I can keep out the reach of her guns, I do not fear her heels, & the sooner you go on board the better—as soon, as you please, said I—& I crow[d]ed some of my papers into my Desk, & tied some up in a hankerchief, & thus went into the boat & was set on board my own ship again.—When I got on my Ships deck, the Frigate was so near that she cou'd easily have sent a shot over me, & coming down will all sail set, & an American Insign at her Mizin peak.—altho I was confidant, she was an English Frigate; still, being compleatly within the reach of her guns, & my ships sails all taken, I had only to lay still & take it.

The Frigate was down, in a few minuits & the boats was manned, & came on board, under the command of an officer, in an american uniform.—the usual questions, of, where from, where bound, how long out &c &c, were ask'd, & ansered; when he thus interogated me, are you not in fear of being taken, No Sir, said I, for I think I am *already*

Elijah Cobb

taken, what? said he, by one of your own Frigates; no,' said I, that is not an american Frigate, nither Sir, are *you* intitled to wear that Button. Well," said he, you are about right.—that is His Britianic majistys Frigate, the Jason, & to her, you are a prize.—now, said he, what have you on board for Cargo; sand Ballast, said I, *what*, did [you] cary to Cadiz, Flour, did it sell yes, it Brought \$20.00 p^r Barrel.—Oh, you've Cash on board said he, No, said I, I remitted the proceeds of my cargo to London, & I have my thirds of exchange, to satisfy you.—well," said he, you have a fine ship here; what will you give for her, & we give you, a clear pafsport into Boston.—after a little reflection, I name'd \$5000.00 well," said he, *give us the money*; Oh, I thank you said I, if it was on board, you wou'd take it without asking me.—I will give you a draft on London.—no, said he, *the cash*, or we *burn* the ship.—well said I, you'l not burn me, in her I hope,—oh, no, you may give orders for your men to pick up their duds, & we will carry them on board the Frigate.—You will remain on board & select yourself a servant, from your crew, the ship is too good to *Burn*.—I accordingly selected my Nephew, E. C. Crosby, to remain with me, my mates & crew, were all carraied on board the Frigate,—After a while, the pinnace was sent

The King's Seal

with special orders for me to come on board the Frigate.—well,” I went on Board, was received at the Ganway, by a Leut^t, & conducted into the Cabin, to the captain, he, with his officers, were then sitting at the dinner table, I was place’d in a chair by his side, & offered a glaſs of wine; after which; he, the capt^t, said to me! what D—d rascal put your papers in that situation, for they were sent to him, as I took them from the cutter, open letters &c,—why”, Sir said I; that D—d rascal, as you are pleas’d to call him, was Lieutenant Jones, commanding his Majesties cutter the Alpheia; why,” said he, he’s broke the Kings Seal, I’ll have the fellow hung,” well Sir, said I, you can do as you please, with your own subjects.—he then said [to] me,” I am satisfied, on examination of your papers, that you have not money on board, as a return cargo, but I shall now ask you a question, which it will be, for your Interest, to answer *candidly*, well Sir, I shall judge better, when I hear the question,! have you money on board, on your own private account; without hesitation, I answer’d Yes, how much said he, about \$2000, . . . it is safe, We, as yet, respect private property, when it does not exceed \$3000.; more than that; we think is smuggled.—

finally, he observed; your officers & men, now

Elijah Cobb

on board here, shall fare, as we do, & we are 6 on 4. well, Sir, we have abundant provisions on board the prise, if you'l permit, I'l send some by the boat that returns with me; certainly said he, & it shall be kept for them exclusively, while they are on board this ship,—I have put a prise master & crew on board your ship, & ordered her for St^t. Johns; & I shall visit that coast, in 8 or 10 days, & will then, send up your officers & crew, I will now send you on board, I have charged the prise master, not to interfere with," but, to conform to, your regulations, in your Cabin, &c &c.

I return'd on board, & we made sail for St^t. Johns as ordered;—I found the prise Master a very pleasant man, & all things went on pleasantly; but by adverse winds, we were 6 days before we arrived at St^t. Johns.—it was evening when we arrived; the next mornⁿ I was taken on shore, & conducted before the Port Admiral, Sir John Thomas Duckworth; after he had made enquiries, relative to my voyage, capture &c &c; he told me, that I had the liberty of the town, provided, I choose to take up my residence on shore, or, I had the liberty of remaining on board the ship—but could not have excess, to the ship, & shore both.—I finally told him, that I wou'd like to remain on board the ship, untill my officers & men were sent

A Prisoner of War

in, after which, I wou'd like to come on shore.—Accordingly, I returned to the ship, where, I was allowed the same use of my cabin, & provisions, as formally, in 4 days, my officers & crew, were sent in, & on board the ship, we were again altogether, & as we had remaining of our sea stock, a shoat, of about 60 lb, I ordered it dresfed, & a good dinner provided for, all hands, of which I pertook; & the next day, took up my residence on shore, at, prisoners Hall, so called, where there were about 20, Masters & supecargoes, prisinners, like myself.—I found, that there were 27 American vefsell, in port, as prises, the Port Admiral, had given liberty to the Supergaroes, & Gentlemen pafsengers to leave; & git home, at there own expence; and provided, they went away altogether, he would give them a protection, against capture by the English—as I had two Brothers, on board my ship, Josiah, & E. C. Crosby, the Idea struck me, that it was *posible*, that I might git liberty, to send the latter, a meer boy, home by the same chance, for they had already purchas'd a small vefsell, & was then fitting her out.—I accordingly drafted a request, to Sir John, stating, in as feeling a manner, as I was capable, the inconsolibility of their Parents &c &c, and waited upon the old Gentleman with it, in person; He looked it over attentively;

Elijah Cobb

looked up at me, & said Yes, Yes, Mr Cobb, send him home to his parents, & I wish I cou'd say the same to you all I accordingly, made preparations for sending the boy home.—I wrote to my family by him, and also, stitched 20 peices of Spanish Gold, into a plaid, which he put into his neck handkerchief, & their wore it, night & day, untill he got home, took it from his neck, & gave it to his Aunt. —6 days, after this vefsell had saild; we were greeted, at a very early hour in the morn", with the sound, " an american, *cartile** *Flagg* flying in the harbour,—We were soon, into the Town, & learned, that a ship had arrived, during the previous night, under the command of an american officer, with a cartile flag; that the officer had then gone, to report himself, to the port Admiral,—we, fourthwith repaired to a noted Coffee house, where the American officer soon arrived.

Altho" we were all strangers, he cordially took us by the hand, as americans, and told us, that he was 2^d Leut," of the American Frigage C—s†

* [*cartile*. Probably cartel = an agreement between enemies for the exchange of prisoners. *Ed.*]

† [General Cobb seems to have had in mind the frigate *Congress*. If so, his memory was at fault, for it was in the *Essex* that Porter captured the *Alert*, which was the first British war vessel taken in the War of 1812. *Ed.*]

An Exchange of Prisoners

Capt^t. Porter that ship, in the harbour; was the British Sloop of War Elert, prize to the C—s, and that, through the impertunity of the British Capt^t, she had been sent in, by Capt^t. Porter, with her officers & crew, all on board, to be exchanged, for the same number of Americans.—But, said the officer, I have cause to fear, that I may be a prisiner with you, for, said he, I left the old Admiral, in a violent rage, at Capt^t. Porters proceedings, of making a cartile, on the high seas. the officer told him, he had no terms to make, his orders, from Capt^t. Porter, was, to lay there 24 hours, & if the terms were not complied with, to proceed on to America, with the Prise & her Crew, or, be your *prisinner*, said he, as I'm in your power, however, in a few minuits, a note was received from the old Admiral, saying, that upon a re-perusual of Capt^t. Porters dispatches, he found that the *honor*, of the British officer was pledg'd, for the fulfilling of the contract, & as he knew his government, always redeem'd the pledges of their officers; he wou'd receive the officers & crew of Ellert, he wou'd give in exchange, every American prissiner in port (& there were 2 to 1) & that we must be off in 24 hours.

Now, commenced a Scene of confusion, and bufsle; the Crew of the cartile was soon landed,

Elijah Cobb

and the Americans as speedily took possession, & the next morn", at about the suns rising, we weighed the anchors of the *Ellert*, left the harbour of St. Johns, and made sail for New York, with 246 Americans on board.—We came on, without falling in, with any floating object, untill we were in the Longitude of the South shoal of Nantucket when saw a topsail Schooner, running off S. Easterly, upon which we fired, & brought her two; she hoisted Sweedish colours, & lay bye, untill we boarded her; We found she was from Boston, bound for the West Idies, and gave us the pleasing account of the American Frigate, the *Constitution*, having captured the, British Frigate the *Garreire*,

This intilligence was communicated to the *Ellert*, by the boarding officer, and in quick time, her yards were manned & three cheers were given, which might have been heard miles.—two days after, we arrived in New York, and dispersed to our several places of residence.—I took pafsage with my two mates, & Josiah Crosby, in a Schooner for *Bafs River*, we reached the river about the suns setting, & being but about 6 miles from my family, I could not feel willing to sleep without seeing them—consequently myself, & my 1st. mate, *Mr. Berry* each hired a Saddle horse, & started for Brewster, and I reach^d. my dwelling, & gave a

Petition to the Port Admiral

knock, at your G. Mothers, sleeping room window, *the same I now occupy*, about 12^oClock. x x x x it may perhaps amuse my dear G. Childen, if I turn back to the time of my arrival, a prisoner, at St. Johns, a circumstance then took place, connected with my knocking at the window, as above

I learned, on my arrival in St. Johns, that the Port Admiral, Sir J. T. Duckworth, had given liberty, to the American Supercargoes & passenger, to purchase a vessel, & git home at their own expence, & he wou'd give them a protection from British Cruseirs; & as I had on board, two Brothers, Josiah & E. C. Crosby, the *latter*, quite a lad; the Idea struck me, that *possibly*, by application, I might obtain liberty to send the boy home, by this conveyance; for they had already purchased a small vessel & were then fitting her for sea—I accordingly drafted a petition; applying pritty strongly to the old Gentlemans feelings, in behalf of the disconsolate Parents &c &c, and presented it myself—after perusing the petition; the old Gen^r rested his head in his hand, for a few moments, and looked up very kindly in my face, saying Yes, Yes, Mr. Cobb, *send him home to his Parents* & I wish I felt at liberty to send every American in port home.—This, wou'd give me an oppertunity of informing my Family of my cap-

Elijah Cobb

ture, of sending some money, spared me by the captors; and grattifying my relatives by sending home their beloved son.

I accordinly fixed him away; making a plaid for his neckhankercheif, with 24 Dubloons in Gold amounting to \$384 dollars, which the *dear child* put round his neck, in my room, in St. Johns & did not take it off, untill in my house, in the presencs of his Aunt; and after having delivered my letters &c—This happened, at about 8 ½ Clock on the same evening I arrived at Bafs revir—well', at 12 ½ Clock, as before stated I knowked at the Winder.

It appears she had been reperusing my Lengthy letter, Amegining & revolving in mind all the horrors of my situation in an English prisin, *after she had been in bed*, & had not been asleep, when I know'd at the Window.

Who is there! said she—it is I, said I—well', what do you want; to come in; for what said she; before I cou'd answer, I heard my daughter D., who was in bed with her say, *why, Mar it is Par*, this was aneogh, the doors flew open, and the greetings of affection & consanguinity miltiplied upon me rapidly.

Thus, in a moment was I transported to the

End of the Voyage

greatest earthly blifs, man can injoy, viz to the injoyment of the happy family circil.

To fall of 1812—



THE foregoing was written by Gen Elijah Cobb during the Year 1843, with the intention of completing, but the state of his health prevented.

He remained at home from 1812 to 1815 or 1816, when he made several voyages to Europe in the Ship 'Paragon' built for him, and considered at the time one of the finest ships of her day.

In 1818 & 1819 he made two voyages to Africa in the Ship "Ten Brothers," taking with him on the first voyage, his son Freeman.

The second voyage, there was much sickness of a contagious character, and the ship on her return was sunk at the end of the wharf to prevent contagion in the city of Boston.*

He left the sea in 1820, and after that time remained in Brewster, Mass. filling the various civil offices of Town Clerk, Treasurer, Inspector Gen-

* Capt. Isaac Clark, Capt. Joseph Mayo, Capt. David Nickerson, Godfrey Lincoln (Capt. Warren's young brother) died in Africa or on the passage home.

Elijah Cobb

eral, Representative and Senator, and Justice of Peace & Quoram, also the military rank of Brigadier General.

He was a strong supporter of the Universalist church of the town, in whose doctrines he took much interest.

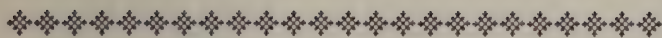
He was tall & straight of fine figure his face very pleasant to look upon. He loved children and was loved by them. Distinguished for his sterling integrity as well as talent loved and respected by all who knew him, he died at the age of eighty. "May our end be like his."

His body & that of his wife lie in the new cemetery, Brewster.

E. W. C.*

Brewster June 19, 1857

* [Elijah Winslow Cobb, a grandson of Elijah Cobb. *Ed.*]



LETTERS

*From Messrs. Joshua Wall, John Baxter,
Jacob Tidd and William Hayden*

Boston Nov 27th 1801.

Cap^t E Cobb,

Sir,

We expect that Peace in Europe, will make considerable differance both in the price, of the articles, with which you were to load, and also in the demand for them, in this Country; by the time you could return; from these considerations we think it best for you to sell the Ship Monsoon, if you can get from Eight to Ten Thousand dollars, clear of the Mates and People, and all other expences: if you cannot sell the Vessel and the prices of goods ordered have not considerably fallen you will please take a freight to any part of America or elsewhere if to be obtain'd on terms that you think will answer, in either of the above mentioned Cases you will place the proceeds of your outward Cargo, (and Ship if sold) in the hands of some safe House in London, say Tho^s Dickerson & C^o if they still remain good—in addition to the above we have only to say that feeling much con-

Elijah Cobb

fidence in your judgment, we leave it to you to do as you think will be most for our Interests.—If the Peace continues we think the following articles will not be worth more in Boston next spring than say,—

Iron—100\$, to 110\$.

Hemp 200\$ to 230\$.

Tumblers 40 Cents p^r Straw.

Glas 8\$, pr. Box, to 9\$.—

Platillas* no Sale unlefs very low.—

we are with much regard

Yours—

JOSHUA WALL

JOHN BAXTER

JACOB TIDD

WILLIAM HAYDEN

* [“A white linen fabric made in Silesia for export to America.” Simmonds, *Dict. Trade*, 1858. *Ed.*]

Orders for the Voyage

*From Bixby, Valentine & Company, and
Humphrey & Clark*

Boston February 11th 1811.

Capt Elijah Cobb

Sir,

you being Master of the Ship William Tell, we wish you as soon as you get your cargo on board to proceed the first fair wind for Lisbon on your arrival at Lisbon you will apply to Mefrs Gould, Brothers & Co and if you with them think it for our interest you will dispose of your cargo to the best advantage or proceed to Cadiz or Gibralter as you may think best. Should you proceed to Cadiz we should recommend the house of the Widow of Morace Roberts & Co to you to do your business if you should proceed to Gibralter we should recommend the Hous of George Allardyce & Co but in all cases should you think best you will value on any other houses you may think most for our interest, after discharging your cargo you will remit the proceeds of our goods and the amount of your freight to Samuel Williams Esqr London payable to the order of Bixby Valentine & Co in favour of Humphrey & Clark

Elijah Cobb

except such amount as you may think proper to invest for a return cargo on our accounts after discharging your cargo you will in case it is at Lisbon or Cadiz ballast your ship with Salt and proceed to the Havana if at Gibralter you will ballast with Stone or Sand as you may be able to obtain, and, if any cheap Red Wine or Malaga Wine can be obtained or any freight you will take and proceed to the Havana with all possible dispatch, In case you get a part of a cargo at any place before mentioned you will have it shipped as the property of Mefs^{rs} Drake & Murdock, merchants of Havana, in the name of some Spanish House, On your arrival at the Havana you will call on Mefs^{rs} Drake & Murdock where you will find our instructions how to proceed, our object is to get a freight home from the Havana for the Ship with laying out what funds you may have for a return cargo in Molasses or Sugar on our Accts. as we may think most for our interest on your Arrival

Should you at your port of discharge be able to procure to the amount of 3 or 4000 dollars in Undoubted Bills on the Havana at 30 or 60 days sight at a handsome discount, guarenteed by either of the houses we have recommended you to, we think it advisable for you to take them and invest the

Account of Belem Port Charges of the
American Ship *Wm. Tell* Captain *Elija Cobb*

Pilotage inwards - - - - -	604 0 0
Entry-autos and Pratique - - - - -	101 0 0
Pratique Officers and Boathire - - - - -	107 0 0
Provedor of the Health - - - - -	02 0 0
Doctor & Surgeon - - - - -	102 0 0
Sending the health clearance to Lisbon -	02 0 0
Second visit of the Health - - - - -	0
Petition and diligence <i>extra services</i>	306 0 0
Waiter of the health day a 300	0
reis each per day - - - - -	0
2 Waiters of the costumhouse at Belem	0
4 days a 600 reis each perday	408 0 0
Belem Certificate - - - - -	024 0
Officers of the Castle - - - - -	308 20
Vice Consul <i>for entry & clearance</i>	300 0 0
<i>Messenger with Certificate to Lisbon</i>	032 0
<i>Police officer</i>	024 0
<i>Disburse</i>	2097 0
	<u>29879 0</u>

Received amount hereof in full Lisbon
the 12th of Dec^r 1811
Spindler

Port Charges in 1811.

Remuneration

proceeds in the Havana as we may think best on your arrival there—

We should not confine the destination of the Ship after her discharge in Europe but think it so unlikely for you to get employ either at, Lisbon, Cadiz or Gibralter for the Ship it will be best to fix her destination that we may be able with what we shall load ourselves to obtain freight sufficient to fill her up in the Havana without los of time—

The voyage being different from our expectations when you left Boston, we agree to give you for your services Thirty dollars p^r month, Two pcent on the nett Sales of your Cargo and half p^r Cent on your remitting Bills to England or returned Cargo and five p^r Ct primage on your Cargo from the Havana to the United States, We believe all the Shippers except Mr G. Snow consign their goods to you and allow you the same commifsions and we understand Mr Snow consigns to you in case you should not sell at Lisbon—

Should the terms before mentioned meet your approbation you will acknowledge this agreement to be the terms on which you proceed the voyage—

Should you not be satisfied with the Compensation we offer, you will proceed the voyage and

Elijah Cobb

we will give you as much as any Master has out of this port on Such a voyage—

Wishing you a pleasant voyage and Safe return

We are yours with respects

BIXBY VALENTINE & C^o
HUMPHREY & CLARK

Elijah Cobb to his Wife

Prince's Island 4th Feb. 1819

My Dear Freind

We are here; & all well, *thanks to the controler of every event*, but under circomstances, must remain here two months longer, as we have a considerable part of our cargo still on hand, business is astonishingly altered since last voyage, the coast is crouded with vefsells & goods of every discription, & the natives have nothing to buy with. This circomstance is owing to the late interior war, which has recently raged with great violence & prevented the natives from procuring Gold dust & Ivory as formally.—my object for waiting is to git clear of the Perishable part of my cargo for coffee, when their Crop comes in, which is now commin[c]ing but will not be at its height untill

Hard Times

the last of March *or* first april—I also calculate to touch at one of the windward W. India Islands (on my passage home) in order to s[ell]* my Tobacco, Flour, Tea, & salmon; which I cannot sell here for an[y thin]g*—& some Corn, which I shall receive here in barter, so [that]* you need not be antious if we dont git home untill [the la]st* of July. we may sooner, but I think it doughtfull;—What I have sold of the cargo, has been at about as good profit as last voyage, the deficulty is not so much in the price, as in finding people able to purchase, Scarcity of produce is the great complaint. This comes by Esq. Clark, via the W. Indies, he will sail to morrow; Cap^t Nickerson is very sick on shore, he will leave him to come with us if he git well, but I have hardly a hope, he is *however* in the hands of a mercifull God, may his will be done, & the submission of the creture sincer. . . . I expect our people will all write to their freinds, another oppertunity will offer in about 15 or 20 days direct for Boston. I will then write again.

Pars love to all his children, he earnestly pray that his life may be spared, & he permitted, once more to greet his little flock in health & hapinefs.

* MS. damaged.

Elijah Cobb

Docter will have all the perticulars respecting the Schooners Voyage by the Esq: it is consequently unnecessary for me to write—. They have not managed matters quite to my mind, but so it is, & prehaps for the best.

Love & respects to all freinds

Your Affectionate Freind

ELIJAH COBB

Feb^y 7th Since the a[bove]* *to the astonishment of us all* Cap^t Nickerson has so far reco[vere]d* that we have taken him on board the ship,—Esq^r C[lar]k* is very sick, the Boy *young Kimbal* is dead.

Feb^y 14th He is gone—. Nickerson does not gain any Strength wishes to go to sea & try a change of air, he is sildom himself we have as yet kept the Esq^{rs} death from him,—such senes of distrefs & death, is severely trying to me, May God preserve me—We all continue well except Cap^t Mayo, he has had a slight fever, but is apperrently doing well; I have had a smart attact of the Nervous head ake, but have got over it,

* MS. damaged.

The Fever

A schooner will sail for Boston in a day or two,
will write more fully

Your as ever

ELIJAH COBB

Elijah Cobb to his Wife

Princes Island 18th Feby 1819

My Dear freind

I wrote you 4 days ago by the Schooner Hope which I sent away under the care of John Dillingham 3^d he being the only one willing to undertake, . . . you may *possibly* git this letter first, it is therefore necessary to repeat that Esq. Clark has paid the dept of nature, it was my task to close his Eyes the 11th Inst after a sicknefs of 8 days—Young Kimbal died 4 days before, Cap^t Nickerson was very sick *on board this ship*, but his fever having turned, it was the advice of Every One to send him to sea, that a change of air would have a good effect; I accordingly did, but fear he never will reach America; we must *however* commit him & ourselves to a mercifull just God, who always acts for the good of his Creaturs & happy would it be for us; if we could always bow with humble submission to his righteous dispensations.

Elijah Cobb

Cap^t Mayo has been *very* sick; his fever turned two days since, & the people here *who are no doubt better judges than strangers* say he is out of danger, he *also* has great currage, but he is very weak. & it will be a long time before he gits [his]* strength, he is on shore, I am something unwell, & [takin]g* Medicine that I cannot see him to day—

Feby 20th *Alas Alas*, Cap^t Mayo is gone; an unfavourable turn in his disorder was his passport to (I trust) realms of blefsednefs—I have ordered the ship amediately to sea; shall work up to the windward of these islands & pafs away 3 or 4 weeks, untill the sickly season pafses of.—I must then return & git pay for 3 or 4000 Dollars of goods trusted out to A. B. C. &c &c, in orders for coffee—and had I have foreseen the consequence; I would not have put it out of my power to have left altogether at pleasure altho we should have bro^t home half our cargo, but circomstanced as I am, we must take all reasonable precaution, and trust our lives & healths, to an alwise, aljust, & mercifull God, *who cannot err*.

The scenes of distrefs, together with anciety of mind, which I have had to encounter within the last 15 days, have nearly unmaned me, I wou^d write to Mrs Mayo but am not able, do afford her all the consolation in your power, & oh, may God

Puts to Sea

of his infinite mercy pour the balm of consolation into her afflicted Bosom—

The crew will all write; they are well as yit, but quite alamed, which induces me to put to sea, where we shall git good air, & *I hope*, fresh sperits

I had, (previous to this last shock) written a few lines to Mrs Clark, I do not feel able to put in order by copying, I inclose it, you'l deliver it, or not, as you think proper.

My love to our little ones & all freinds—dont give yourself too much anciety, put your whole trust in God, he can releive in the greatest distrefs or most [imm]inent* danger.

Your affectionate freind

ELIJAH COBB

21. Feb^y We meant to have got out yesterday, but we had our ship to rig *almost* as well as sails to bend & Ballast to git—the Vefsell which brings this, will sail amediately, we shall go in the course of the day—I feel nicely this morn” *as to health*. M^r Thatcher & M^r Crosby are both hearty, thank God. Myrick & Bates, complained yesterday, we gave them both a smart purge, they are nicely this morning & no appearance of a fever, the sea air

* MS. damaged.

Elijah Cobb

will make them harty again; as I before observ^d Amigation in this country works wonders; As to myself I feel a sort of pleasing confidence that I am again, *to be permitted* to visit my beloved family—to offer a word of consolation, to the afflicted freind of those entoomb'd in this foreign land, but in every instance, I trust I shall be an-able to say in sincerety thy will be done.

Your

E. C

Elijah Cobb to his Son, Elijah Cobb, 2nd

Prince's Island 24th April 1819

My dear Son

This will accompay a letter directed to you *or* Mr Haven (should you be absent) containing a Bill of exchange for 300 Dollars, with perticular instructions relative therto. should you receive it before I return, you may send it to y^r Mar, *or* keep it in your hands (as you like).

We are all well, shall tarry here a few days longer & the[n] proceed for St Thomases, where I hope to procure a considerable quantity of coffee. & then proceed as bifore mentioned, hope yet to reach Boston in all the month of July.



Sold by P. A. Meier, No. 107 Pearl Street, New York.

No. 1 & 67 — 145 Pairs Ivory.
 " " 1.53. bags & 2000 in Sacks Coffee.
 " " 1.8. Pouches. Palm Oil.

In good order and well-conditioned, by *Elijah Todd* whereof is on board the good *Ship* called the *Ten Brothers* now lying in the Master for this present Voyage *Elijah Todd* in American Port of *Princis Island* and bound for *Boston*. *Two thousand seven hundred eighty pounds* To say, *Two thousand seven hundred seventy five* of *Ivory* Six thousand seven hundred *seventy five* the *pounds of Coffee*, in *Bags Sacks*. *Eight Pouches* of *Palm Oil*.

being marked and numbered as in the Margin, and are to be delivered in the like good order and well-conditioned at the aforesaid Port of *Boston* (the Danger of the Seas only excepted) unto *Samuel Thompson Esq.* or to his Assigns, he or they paying Freight for the said Goods *one cent per pound for Ivory, one cent & 1/2 for Coffee, & ten dollars per cask for Palm Oil* with *Primage and Average* accustomed. In witness whereof the Master or Purser of the said *Ship* hath affirmed to two Bills of Lading, all of this Tenor and Date; one of which being accomplished, the other to stand void. Dated in *Princis Island* the *eight* Day of *May* 1818 *Elijah Todd*

Ivory, Coffee and Palm Oil: a Typical Bill of Lading.

The Rainy Season

I expect before this, my letters (by the two schooners) filled with heart rending tidings to our Brewster freind have been received, my mental, as well as bodily distrefs, has been such, that I hardly know what I wrote in those letters (probably much incoherency) as they were dictated by the feelings of the moment, but I trust those scenes are not to return upon us this voyage, the place is healthy, frequent turnardoes, with thunder lightning & copeous showers purifies the air, all nature smiles, & the human form wears a cheerfull countenance in place of the gastly visage, which so recently presented itself at all points.—What abundant cause of greatfull praise to the supream controler of every event both of time & eternity, more especially to *us* the living monuments of His mercy who for wise purposes (tho" hidden from our veiw) have been spared while so many have fallen around us, May we exprefs our gratitude by keeping his commands.

I have written to your mar by this conveyance hope it will not be long (after you receive this) before I shall be permitted to see my little flock in health.

Your Affectionate Father

ELIJAH COBB

Elijah Cobb

Samuel Swan, Jr., to Mrs. Elijah Cobb

[Ship] Belvidere—Quarantine—

June 27th 1819

Mrs. Cobb—

Madam—

I arrived here last evening 84 Days from Africa—I left the Ten Brothers at Princes Island April 4th—After the loss of Cap^t Mayo, the ship proceeded to sea in a very sickly state—The change of air soon produced a favourable effect; and on the Ships return to Princes in March they were all quite recovered, though still m[uc]h* debilitated—One man only was any ways ill during my stay, & he was again on duty when we sail'd—The ship had been on her return to port thoroughly clensed by washing with vinegar, & limejuice, and twenty four hour's fumigation with strong charcoal fires in the hold, & between decks—During this time I was honoured with Cap^t Cobb's company on board the Belvidere—

I believe, Madam, you may rest perfectly free from any apprehensions of the sickness again appearing on board the Ten Brothers—Every precaution has been taken to purify the ship—& the more immediate cause of their sickness was also re-

* MS. damaged.

Good News

moved—It is during the few weeks interval between the closing of the Dry, & setting in of the Rainy season, that the Islands are most unhealthy—The atmosphere is then heavy, & the Harbor is so situated that the little air that is in motion during the day is intirely secluded from the shipping, while a vertical sun produces an intensity of heat that operates powerfully to render the place unhealthy—After the rains commence, the frequent tornadoes which accompany that season, & always blow from the eastward, directly into the harbor, so purify the air that there is little danger of sickness with the usual precautions which all strangers should observe for preservation of health in warm climates—

As I was in daily communication with Capt Cobb, I can assure you of his intire restoration to health, except the debility incident to a severe attack of fever—

It was Capt Cobb's intention to close all business with the utmost dispatch, & he thought to be able to sail in all April to a certainty—He will touch at Martinique on his passage to America—

I am fully aware, Madam, that the charge of presumption may be alledged against me—Indeed (reasoning from analogy) I offer no other apology for writting, than the satisfaction I be-

Elijah Cobb

lieve my own family would recieve by any communication from a person who had seen me abroad, at a time when a variety of reports respecting my safety would render any news highly gratifying—

I cannot close without most respectfully offering, thro' your family, the tribute of my consolation to the family of the late Henry Clarke Esqr of your t[ow]n*—On my first arrival at Princes, in Dec^r, I found him there; & our constant intercourse, during the short stay I there made, gave me abundant cause to honour & admire him—on my leaving the place he accompanied me out of the harbor, & our last resolve, when he quited me, was, to visit each others families when both should be at home—Nothing could exceed the shock on my feelings, on again visiting the Island, to learn his lamented death—If the respect of a stranger can be acceptable to his family, I beg, Madam, you will mention my name, as one who feels proud to acknowledge an acquaintance, & friendship, with him abroad—

With regard, I remain,
Madam, respectfully your
Most Humble servant—

SAM^L SWAN JR—

* MS. damaged.

A Birthday Letter

M^{rs} ELIJAH COBB—Brewster—

NB. Letters from Cap^t Cobb, have been sent to his Son in Boston—others from people on board, will be forwarded by post office on my arrival to town.

S. S.

*Elijah and Mary Cobb to their Son,
Elijah Cobb, 2nd*

Brewster, 27th June 1820

Dear Son

Your affectionate parents fondly recolect that This Day, compleats the full time of 21 years, since the *Supreem* doner of every thing, was pleased to gladen the parental heart in the birth of a Son; Who has since continued his existance thro" Infancy; thro" Youth, & bro^t him to the commincment of manhood, without suffering any action (of their childs) to wound their hearts; What abundant cause of greatfull Praise for those inestimable favours,—May He enable them to suplicate with fervency & *effect*, to continue His Mercies to them & their children, & may it laden all their hearts with a greatfull song of Thankgiving & Praise,—We recieved your letter by M^r

Elijah Cobb

Copeland & noted your observations upon Mr H's enquiries, we think it wou'd be as well, to continue where you are a while, (at least) untill the Fall,—But altho" I wou'd not inculcate the Idea of taking the advantage of any ones necessity; I think as Mr H. has contributed so *very* sparringly to y^r support during the long time you have remained with him, He ought now to give you a full support *at least* untill you see your way clear to commence businefs for yourself, which time we look forward to with pleasure, mixed with a degree of anxiety, naturel to parental feelings always antious for the wellfare of their ospring. prehabs the old edage will apply, *that effection is blind*, but we feel confident (from your former & present deportment) that propriety, entigrity, virtue & piety will govern all your actions,—Those virtues exercised by a finite being will receive an *infinite* approbation & blefsing—

Every advice, & every afsistanc from your Parents, will at all times be cheerfully bestowed, & it is (we presume) unnecessary to ask, who is so suitable to advise a child as its fond doating parents—We will close for the present, by supplicating Our Heavenly Father, to take you into His holy keeping; to direct each gardian Angel to watch over

To His Son

you, that no improper action may ever sully a good name or wound y^r parents feelings

Affectionately Yours

E. & M. COBB

NB. Debby is favourably convalescent. wish you to inform me, if you hear any thing from Capt Tycofs, or M^r Hathaway—

We hope Mrs Haven will come with Lincoln (expect him the next tide) we shall be highly pleased with a visit from her, & think it can be made pleasant to her.

Elijah Cobb to his Son, Elijah Cobb, 2nd

Brewster 2^d Jan^y 1836

Dear Son

As our representative will leave in the mornⁿ I avail myself of the opportunity to forward by him the small paper Package, which I found snugly laced up, in the branch part, of your last package of trees. I found the mice had made a hole thro^o the paper, among some small seed, when, or where it was done I cannot say, I found no other traces of them either about the package or ground where they were—I put the inverlope around them again, but shall have an eye to them frequently.

Elijah Cobb

The Lyceum appear to be in successful operation, Mr Williams gave the introductory address, his remarks were based upon the word *curiosity*, it was good; the best production ever I heard from him, the following officers were chosen—George Copeland esq^r, President, Joseph Sampson Esq. Vice P. — John P. Washburn, Secretary, *my humble self*, Treasurer, and Franklin Hopkins Libraⁿ—24 became members, by signing the constitution, & paying from 50^{cs} to 2.00—the members were then, formed into 6 Sections of 4 each, for discussions, by the board of managers, (the 5 officers as above) and the following subject assigned, for the next wednesday eve” viz, which exerts the greatest influence, in a country Town, *wealth or knowledge*—the discussion was assigned to the 1st & 2^d Sections, under the managements of the Rev^d mefs^{rs} Conant, & Williams, the former advocating wealth, & the latter knowledge—the subject was ably & ingeniously managed on both sides, but the decision was in favour of wealth. an addition of 17 became member, making now 41.

The next Wednesday Eve” we are to have an address by the Rev^d Mr Simpkins—the subject for discussion is, *which enjoys the greatest satisfaction, the Rich man, or poor man*—assigned to Sections 3^d & 5th Rev^d Mr Pratt, & Father—I ex-

Local Affairs

pect a powerfull opponent, but cannot feel any fear upon the subject. He cannot expect much assistance from his Section, except what he gits from our bro^r Jo. & I have M^r Washburn in my Section, which I think will match Docter.—There appears an interest in the cause, among our young men, the older ones must begin, but they will soon come forward.

Our high School goes on well, it is as full, as they can accommodate 46—there appears perfect satisfaction with M^r Washburn, the instructor—he appears to be *wide awake*, & master of his business.

We are looking hourly for the Fayette, think she will be here in the morn"—she no doubt came unexpectedly to you, but she must have had a fine time, and our shore is now clear of Ice for her return.

My eyes are somthing better, but very weak, I am obliged to deny myself the pleasure of reading, altogether, and I am in agony with writing thus much, altho" I have had 5 or 6 spells at it.

Grandfather wishes the children all, *a happy new year*, not as the compliment of the season, which is in the mouths of the multitude, but in sencerity of heart.

FATHER

Elijah Cobb

Elijah Cobb to his Son, Elijah Cobb, 2nd

Brewster April 3^d 1837

Dear Son

Your last p^r Patriot, gave general directions about placeing manure &c &c, all which, Father thinks, manifests agricultur^el judiciousness. Freeman commenced work March 27th, but anticipating your injuntion, relative to sea-weed, & a fine opportunity presenting last week, he did very little else—we shall have, by night, anough up by my salt works, to replenish your Barn Yard—a noble lot, of excell^t seaweed came on shore, directly below my landing, while the other parts of the shore was quite distitute—I hireed an extra team, & extra man to pitch one day & we have secured, a fine lot of it. F. & Joshua are at it to day, I have tried to git another team, but have not succeeded, there is still abundanc on the shore, & I shall keep the boys at it, as such a fine chance, sildom offers, of so good a quality.

I expect you intend to lay down, the peice of land you planted, back of the barn, if so, you'l want grafs seed for it,—I shou'd put on it, $\frac{1}{2}$ bush^l herds grafs, $\frac{1}{2}$ bush^l red top, & 8 lbs of red clover—Oats, we shall have anough, between us—you have not many, but I have a plenty.

Townsmen and Farmer

The Patriot will go wednesday Eve"—I hope you'll be able to return with her, ab^t Saturday night—I am writing now, (morn") as I shall be engaged thro" the remainder of the day—the Towns committee are coming to settle the accounts of the Treasury for last year; & in the afternoon a Town meeting of importance—a Poor house in agitation, herring fishery to be new moddled, *suplus revenue*, &c &c.

in haste

FATHER.

Elijah Cobb to his Son, Elijah Cobb, 2nd

Brewster Sept^r 12th 1838

Dear Son

The packet did not git to her moorings, to enable us to git the roller & seed out, untill monday eve", anticipating it wou'd come, M^r F. had prepared the upland for the seed, Viz. the peice where y^r wheat was, & the strip, quite down to the ditch, where my oats was; for the swamp part of that; ploughed, equal to any of the upland, having been well mixed with upland soil, & frequently ploughed, before—calculation was made, to commence operations with the seed & roller, on tues-

Elijah Cobb

day morn", but when the morning came, a storm had commenced, which still continues, without intermission, consequently, they were compelled to suspend those oppera^{ns} for the time being. They have got in, nearly all the Indian wheat, that is worth harvesting; that article, turns out slim; Gen^l Mayo, Mr Crocker, & Cap^t Freeman, have abandoned the Idea of harvesting any, except, for their hogs, in the straw—I have givin mine, (the little strip) to my pigs, as they required it—they love it dearly, & thrive finely upon it.—We think there is somthing uncongenial in our atmospere to that plant.

Since the storm commenced, they have been attending to threshing wheat &c &c. Mr Freeman had got all the creek stuff, home, & all the salt hay secured in *stack*, before the storm commenced, so that you have nothing exposed to injury, except the peat, & that is so far made, that the injury to it, will be little, or nothing. In regard to seed, for the swampy part of your land, we think *a bushel* will be sufficient, for what you will be able to seed this fall—I wish you to understand, that we included, in the 4 Acres of upland, the strip, east of my orchard, & the whole of the south strip (next Mrs Snows) down to the main ditch—that strip, has been raised & tilled so much, that it is suscep-

The Plough

table of the same seed, as upland, for this, you have sent seed already. If you cannot procure *foul meadow seed*, I should recommend that you git 3 pecks of red top, & one peck of herds grafs, & mix them, in the same bag—if you can git *foul meadow*, $\frac{1}{2}$ bush^l of each, that, & red top, & no herds grafs.

I surely wrote you how the swamp ploughed east of my orchard; that after going round; that they had to stop the team, & work with hoes, hands &c—there were, an abundance of large roots & stumps, which required prying out, hauling away &c; they have carried, something like a cord, to your wood house. The plough, is A $2\frac{1}{2}$, a larger one, no doubt, would do better, but no plough would turn it over smooth, while coming in contact, every few feet, with stumps & roots that required the team & prys to start out of their beds—however, with hoes, *elbow greafs*, & the plough, it looks as if the rollow & harrow would leave it pritty smooth; it would add greatly to the benifit of it, if you can git on a quantity of sand; or soil of some kind before sowing the seed on the swamp. I hope you will be able to be here, the last of the week, & see, & act for yourself.

Mr. Freeman says the sheer of the plough, has worn so small, that anew one is necessary, the pres-

Elijah Cobb

ent one will not cut a furrow of any weadth, & under those circomstances, haveing considerable hard plouging to perform, this fall, & next spring, perhaps it will be advisable to git a new, & larger one, the present one can be fitted for light ploughing, and favour the new one.

The print (Nettle)† directed to Cap^t Freeman & myself, was received, & I annex a list of 8 subscribers, will you order them sent, with the back numbers, & pay for them, & I will have the money collected to refund, when you come.

all well.

FATHER

Subscribers to the Nettle.

Geo ^o Copeland—Jo. Sampson.	{	They come so
Enoch Pratt—Freeman Mayo.		cheap, that no
Benj ⁿ Berry—Solo ⁿ Freeman.		dou[bt]* 20 or 30
Freeman Rogers—E. Cobb.		wou'd be taken, in the
	{	Tow[n]* if it was
		known—Copeland, &
		Docter say; they will
		increase the list.

* MS. torn.

† [A Whig Campaign paper published in Boston. Volume I, Number 1, appeared September 5, 1838. *Ed.*]

A Southerly Blow

Thursday A. M. 13th

The wind has got round to the south, & blows a hurricane, I have just returned from your young orchard, have been assisting Mr F. in resecuring some of the trees, which it seemed as if the wind would take from the ground, roots, stakes, & all—the fruit is prostrated, nearly all; I beleive there are 8 of those *delicious* plums, remain'g on the tree, but those which blew off, were perfectly ripe—if practicable, they will be kept untill you, & caro" come; I advised Mr F. to take those from the tree also.

Notwithstanding the weight of your roller, it runs very easy, F. & Eldridge, after puting it together, could run it about any where, with ease.

FATHER

the wife of Elisha Bangs, expired at 7 this morn".

Date Due

MAY 15 1934

JUL 7 1934

SEP 1 1934

SEP 25 1934

B C653

Cobb - Elijah Cobb; A Cape Cod

Skipper

57641

BREWSTER LADIES' LIBRARY



0 2200 0044184 4

d. 1
For Reference

Not to be taken from this room

Brewster Library

Brewster Ladies' Library
Brewster, Mass. 02631

